



# News & Views

**Greater Providence Chapter**  
**Parents, Families, Friends and Allies United with**  
**LGBT People to Move Equality Forward**

Volume 15, Number 1

January/February 2014

## Homophobia in the Church

**H**ow would you react if you or your loved one received the following letter from your house of worship?

Dear Nathan,

We are writing to you out of love and concern for you and your soul. In Ephesians 4:15 God directs us to "speak the truth in love". So, we cannot show love unless we also speak the truth about sin.

God's Word is very clear about the lifestyle you have chose. Homosexual conduct is condemned as unnatural and sinful in Roman 1:26-27...(the letter writers proceed to quote biblical scripture).

So we pray that you see the seriousness of what you are doing. You have chosen a sinful lifestyle that flies in the face of what God in His Word condemns. You have done this in public defiance. Your eternal welfare is at stake.

Our hope and prayer is that you will repent. That means that you recognize how you are living is sinful and in remorse turn to Jesus for forgiveness. It follows that you would then amend and change your sinful lifestyle. (More scripture is quoted.)

We are looking for you to respond to our concern by contacting us within the next two weeks, before October 9th, 2013.

Out of concern for your soul and in Jesus Name,  
 (The letter was signed by 4 members of the Board of Elders of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church located in South Attleboro, MA.)

The individual who received this letter has not been a member of this church for some time and had no interest in returning. His initial shock after receiving such a letter soon turned to anger at how receiving such a letter might affect

someone who was still struggling with reconciling their sexual orientation with their religious beliefs. Nathan and his husband Eric are secure in their beliefs and are surrounded by family who support them. But, his fear is that others,



especially young people, may not be so fortunate.

In a 2010 survey, two out of three Americans believe gay people commit suicide at least partly because of messages coming out of churches and other places of worship. More than four out of 10 Americans say the message coming out of churches about gay people is negative, and about the same number say those messages contribute "a lot" to negative perceptions of gay and lesbian people. The survey was conducted in 2010 by The Public Religion Research Institute in the wake of a number of highly publicized suicides by gay people.

LGBT youth are four times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers. Those that get rejected by their family, which happens in a lot of religiously-based homes, are eight times more likely to commit suicide. Quoting blogger Eliel Cruz, "I would even go as far to say

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

### Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

**SUPPORT:** To support parents on their journey to understand and accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children; and to help children, of whatever age, to understand and come out into loving relationships with their families;

**EDUCATION:** To enlighten an ill-informed public,

**ADVOCACY:** To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

PFLAG is a volunteer grass-roots, tax-exempt, non-profit organization, not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of all members of the LGBTQ community, but we are much more than that. Those who identify as gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender, or queer are also encouraged to attend our meetings., with or without their family members. Parents and friends may come with or without their loved ones who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Confidentiality is assured.

### PFLAG/Greater Providence

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# news from our chapter

## Demystifying Bisexuality

**K**atrina Chaves, founder of the Rhode Island Bi Resource Network and Co-director of a documentary film entitled “The Other B Word” enlightened our December meeting attendees not only with what it means to be bisexual but also about the lack of visibility and misconceptions surrounding those who identify as bisexual.

Bisexuality is just one point somewhat center on the sexual orientation spectrum. A bisexual person may be equally attracted to both men and women, or attracted to one gender more than another. The distinction is that they are attracted at some level to both men and women; and just as with any other orientation, they were born that way.

Whereas gays and lesbians have gained acceptance in society over the years,



reasons is the stereotype of bi men bringing AIDS into the heterosexual community and thus being identified as “traitors.”

As a result of this lack of acceptance and lack of a cohesive community for this group, bisexuals have rates of substance abuse, mental health issues, and suicide that are greater than the heterosexual population. There are also higher rates of reported rapes and stalking within this

*“Being fluid with your sexuality is not as accepted as it is with gender fluidity.”*

bisexuals have continued to be invisible to larger society and often looked upon with disdain from the LGT community. Misconceptions abound about bisexuals, who are often wrongly viewed as being promiscuous, confused, greedy, distrustful, etc. The fact is that bisexual men and women are no more likely to possess any of these behaviors than heterosexual, gay or lesbian identified people. However, because of these long-held perceptions, bisexuals most often find themselves being accepted by neither the heterosexual nor the LGT communities.

Being fluid with your sexuality is not as accepted as it is with gender fluidity. There is a big divide between lesbian and bi women in terms of acceptance, with lesbian women not fully accepting bisexual women as part of their community. The bisexual community is often mistreated and marginalized by the LGT community.

Ms. Chaves expressed that it is frustrating to have people constantly skeptical and questioning you about your sexuality. It is difficult to be out and bisexual. Although the percentages in the population may be similar, there are far fewer bi men out than bi women. One of the

group. They often have problems even being accepted by their partners.

So, how do we change these perceptions? We need the make sure the “B” does not get lost in LGBTQ. There is a national organization representing bisexuals, BiNetUSA, which can be accessed on-line at <http://www.binetusa.org>. However, funding for this organization, as well as other local bi-oriented groups, from LGBTQ organizations that provide grants is basically non-existent. Specifically in Rhode Island, there are no bi organizations or spaces (really no sense of community at all). In an effort to provide a voice for the bisexual community, Ms. Chaves recently founded the **Rhode Island Bi Resource Network**, which is currently seeking volunteers to organize bi support groups. Go to [www.ribinetwork.org](http://www.ribinetwork.org) for more information. In her documentary, “**The Other B Word,**” Ms. Chaves’ goal is to eradicate stereotypes and myths about the bisexual community.

In order to change perceptions about bisexuals we need to provide greater education about bisexuality in both the heterosexual and gay communities, which hopefully will lead to more people

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## Demystifying Bisexuality

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willing to come out as bisexuals and let their own voices be heard.

Katrina Chaves is a graduate of Rhode Island College with degrees in Political Science and Women's Studies. She currently works as an activist and freelance writer, focusing on the intersectionality of social and environmental justice. She also works as a high school paraprofessional. Her experience working with LGBTQ youth has deepened her commitment to the field of mental health/social work, because, in her words "a lack of 'community'—across the boundaries of age, class, race, orientation, and gender—is at the root of SO much of our struggle."

## Transgender study looks at 'exceptionally high' suicide-attempt rate



Jennifer Doyle, left, embraces her girlfriend Trisha Pedroza outside the West Hollywood Library during the reading of names of transgender people beaten and killed in hate crimes during a Transgender Day of Remembrance. (Liz O. Baylen / Los Angeles)

A whopping 41% of people who are transgender or gender-nonconforming have attempted suicide sometime in their lives, nearly nine times the national average, according to a sweeping survey released three years ago.

In a new study released on January 28, 2014, researchers dug deeper into that number, analyzing the results of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey to examine what puts transgender people at such "exceptionally high" risk.

Researchers from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law found that the risk of attempting suicide was especially severe for transgender or gender nonconforming people who had suffered discrimination or violence, such as being physically or sexually assaulted at work or school.

Among transgender people who became homeless because of bias against their

gender identity, 69% said they had tried to kill themselves. Out of those who had been turned away by a doctor because they were transgender or gender-nonconforming, 60% had attempted suicide sometime in their lives, the survey found.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents who were the victims of domestic violence at the hands of a family member had attempted suicide, the study also showed. Suicide attempts were less common among transgender and gender-nonconforming people who said their family ties had remained strong after they came out.

"This report punctuates what PFLAG families know is fundamental -- that there is life-saving merit, demonstrable value, and paramount need for family acceptance," said Diego Sanchez, policy director for PFLAG National, an organization for family, friends and supporters of LGBT people.

Being "out" as transgender was also tied to steeper risk, the study showed: People who tell everyone that they are transgender or gender-nonconforming, or who said that other people could always or usually tell that they were transgender, were more likely to have attempted suicide.

Researchers wrote that being recognized as transgender by other people probably made them a target of more discrimination, putting them at greater risk -- a finding that echoes earlier research.

Having a mental health condition increased the chance that a transgender or gender-nonconforming person had attempted suicide, as did having a lower income or being HIV-positive. But researchers said that the most stunning finding was just how high the risk was for all transgender and gender-nonconforming people, no matter how much money they made, how much education they had, or whether they were single or married.

Even transgender people at comparatively "low" risk were still much more likely to have attempted suicide than the general population, they wrote, with "lows" often ranging from 30% to 40%. Transgender and gender-nonconforming people who had gotten graduate degrees, for instance, had a lifetime risk of attempting suicide of 31% -- lower than less-educated transgender people, but still astoundingly high.

"It's alarming all across the board," said Jody L. Herman, manager of transgender research at the Williams Institute.

Researchers cautioned that it remains unclear whether the earlier survey, which included more than 6,400 people, was representative of the entire transgender & gender-nonconforming population of the United States. However, other surveys in the U.S. and abroad have also suggested "an unparalleled level of suicidal behavior among transgender adults," they wrote.

(Credit: Emily Alpert Reyes, L.A. Times, January 28, 2014)

## Report: 1.4 million Latino adults identify as LGBT

A new report by the UCLA Williams Institute found that an estimated 1.4 million -- or 4.3 percent -- of U.S. Hispanic adults consider themselves lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The report is based on Census data, which relies on self-identification through Census forms, as well as some Gallup polls. Among the general population, recent Gallup surveys put the nationwide LGBT population at about 3.5 percent.

"While sometimes less visible in popular representations of LGBT people and families, Latinos make up a sizable portion of the LGBT population, and they tend to live in Latino, as opposed to LGBT, communities," said co-author Gary J. Gates, Williams Distinguished Scholar.

Among the findings:

- About 146,000 Hispanics live in same-sex couple households. Of these same-sex households, 29.1 percent are raising children.
- Most LGBT Latinos live in areas with a high concentration of Hispanics, rather than a high concentration of the broader LGBT population.
- The top three states with LGBT Latinos are Texas, Nevada and California. These are followed by Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, New Jersey, Kansas, Florida and New York.
- Almost 1/3 of same-sex couples with a Latino householder live in New Mexico, California and Texas. The other states with the highest number of LGBT Hispanics in a same-sex couple are Washington, DC, Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, New York and New Jersey.

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## Daddy? You're Kicking Me Out??

BY SUSAN COTTRELL,  
FREEDHEARTS ON JANUARY 24, 2014

*My son came out to his dad and I last night. His dad kicked him out. So I am now in a hotel with my son. Home is where the heart is and tonight that makes Motel 6 home. <3*



No definition of real love includes throwing out your gay child. That's more like hate, condemnation, conditional acceptance – and that should have no place in a person who claims to follow Jesus. It is so unlike Christ.

My friend's lesbian daughter cut herself badly last night. Her explanation to her mom is that she knows her dad will never accept her. She can't take the pain. Now she faces some serious ramifications in her own life, and her dad will say, "See? It's because she's gay." But her orientation is *not* the problem. Her father's rejection and conditional love is the problem.

If you're a parent who is upset/angry/beside yourself because your child is gay, I beg of you to stop and think about what you're doing — about how you will react, about how you will love. Does the way you are loving, accepting and affirming your child match with the very heart of God? Does it match how God has loved you?

You cannot fathom the wounds in a child's heart, in a child's life when a parent rejects them at their very core, when a parent says, "I cannot accept you the way you are" or "I cannot accept you unless you change." Moms, Dads, this world is *full* of people who will judge and accept or reject our children based on many things. We are the ones who are supposed to love them unconditionally. No matter what. Period. We are the ones who are supposed to fill and strengthen their hearts with unconditional love so they can withstand the conditional (often brutal) love from others.

The last thing we need to do is *also* offer conditional love. To deepen those wounds with condemnation, harsh words and actions, even kicking them out of the home and the family, can lead to tragic results.

And please, don't justify your cruelty by pulling God into it, doing it all "in the name of Jesus." God does not tell us to kick our kids out of the house because we don't approve of who they are. He does not tell us to berate, abuse or assault them. Instead, put on the heart of Christ we see in Billy Graham's answer, when asked what he would do if he had a gay child: "I'd love that one all the more."

*Please.*

If you're *married* to someone who is upset/angry/beside themselves over your gay child, then you may have some decisions to make. You may have to fight for your child. You may have to choose a risky and frightening path, because to stand with your rejecting spouse may result in a dead child. Not to overstate the case, but I've seen it happen. Find support. Don't go along with a rejecting spouse to "keep the peace."

If you know a child who's been kicked out for being gay, perhaps you can help find a place for them to go. Could they stay with you? The Bible tells us to take them in, not kick them out.

Ask God to guide you in these difficult situations. If you are the one who's been rejected, you need to know it's not your fault. It's totally not about you. That is, you did not cause it. Being true to yourself did not cause it. Thousands of gay kids are *not* kicked out of their homes. "Kicking out" is a choice — and it was not *your* choice. I know we automatically blame ourselves when we're rejected, but I assure you, *this is not your fault.*

I'm sorry to say you cannot change your parents. Your only path to life will be to find your own way with God, to survive with God's capable hand, and let your parents be. Let God work in their hearts. Don't figure out how to earn their approval, because earned approval is not love — and it's always shifting. Certainly parents need time to come around, but if they're throwing you out of the house, then it's time to let them be and seek out those who will help you.

*"We have to move a generation of people to have unconditional love for their kids. At the core of it is parental love and acceptance. That's the core of it. It's not societal; it's parental."* Dan Bucatinsky, from *Scandal*. (Reprinted with permission [www.Freedhearts.org](http://www.Freedhearts.org).)

## Homophobia in the Church

(Continued from Page 1.)

that the Church acts as an extension of our family, and that rejection affects us just as much."

Christian evangelicals had a pivotal influence on the new law passed recently making it illegal to be LGBT in Uganda. God-fearing, Bible-thumping, meant-to-believing Christians encouraged a law that makes it illegal for people to be who they are, simply because they breathe. LGBT students are being expelled, suspended, or discriminated against in their religious educational institutions. There is no way to sugar-coat this: It's homophobic, and yes it's anti-gay.

The news, however, is not all bleak. There are many other churches that are welcoming and affirming to all. And, recently, other religious groups are fighting back. More and more Methodist clergy are standing up for marriage equality, for example, and the momentum continues to grow. (See related article on Page 5.)

(Credit for excerpts of this article goes to bloggers Shiao Chong, Dan Savage, and Eliel Cruz.)

## Methodist Clergy Stand Up for Marriage Equality

More and more Methodist clergy are standing up for marriage equality and the momentum continues to grow. Retired seminary president, Rev. William McElvaney, called church trials "the Methodist version of inquisition in the 20th and 21st centuries." GLAAD recently shared the story of Rev. Thomas Ogletree, who became the latest minister to go on trial for officiating at the wedding of his son to the man he loves.

"The defrocking of Frank Schaefer brought great shame to our denomination and much pain to our LGBTQ brothers and sisters," said Bishop Minerva G. Carcano of the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church. She sees the growing movement challenging the church policy as a turning point. "It is a moment of real possibility for change in the church."

Bishop Melvin Talbert summed it up as follows, "As we continue to witness people stand for their faith as well as their LGBT friends and family, it will only be a matter of time that church leaders will see that love is love and know that the LGBT community is a community made up of many people who love their church as much as they love and care about their fellow church members. This is the message all houses of worship should follow."

## Why Senior Centers Are Worse Than High School When It Comes to Gay Bashing

The bigotry that's faded in much of America still lingers in the elderly, tarnishing the golden years for LGBT seniors.

For LGBT senior citizens, this moment in American history must be particularly powerful. They've lived long enough to witness a nation that most never dared to imagine. For them, there are vivid memories of homes and hometowns where being gay could mean suffering physical and verbal abuse, and being blatantly discriminated against.

But many LGBT seniors face cruel reminders of worse times, in their younger years, when they begin visiting retirement communities or assisted living facilities in search of a comfortable, welcoming place to spend their golden years.

Faced with the familiar hostilities of yesteryear, LGBT seniors often cope with the difficult reality that many in their age group have yet to catch up with the progress toward respect and equal rights for LGBT people.

That's why a new LGBT-friendly apartment building for lower-income seniors that opened in Philadelphia is being hailed as a welcome respite; it's one of the first of its kind, and it reveals a broader need for such accommodations. The unusual home offers a positive, supportive atmosphere and easy access to support services.



(Photo: Maxx Images/Getty Images)

The 56-unit John C. Anderson Apartments, named in honor of a city councilman who fought for gay rights, is in a gay-friendly neighborhood. With monthly rents of \$192 to \$786, the building is mostly full. Given that transportation

can be a challenge for senior citizens, the building was strategically located in a spot where residents can access community services.

To support the LGBT seniors, the nearby William Way LGBT Community Center will be providing programs at the building, said Chris Bartlett, the center's executive director.

Fortunately, Bartlett says, "it's a case that I think people get in a bipartisan way."

This generation of LGBT seniors "created the context for the civil rights battle" that has changed the lives of LGBT people of all ages, Bartlett says. It's important to "make sure in their senior years that they have the best services available."

While the needs of LGBT teens and young adults have begun to get a measure of much needed attention in recent years (the It Gets Better campaign being one visible example), Bartlett says community centers around the country are also making LGBT senior citizens a priority.

Politicians are listening. Spirit on Lake is another affordable housing complex recently marketed to older members of the LGBT community in Minneapolis. Two complexes are in the works in Chicago and San Francisco, and there are plans for building units in New York.

*(Credit: Melissa Rayworth is a regular contributor to TakePart. She has also written for the Associated Press, Salon and Babble, January 17, 2014.)*



## Marriage Equality USA

On December 8, 2013, Anzalone Liszt Grove Research surveyed 800 registered voters in states where same-gender couples could not marry about whether they should be able to marry, and reported that **51%** said yes, **41%** said no, with **8%** unaccounted for. Among non-equality states, support is strongest in central states (**59%** to **36%**), then western states (**53%** to **34%**), then southern states (**46%** to **46%**). Among non-equality states nationwide, **56%** of voters expect same-gender civil marriage to be legal within 2 years, and **78%** expect minimal or a positive impact.

## Report: LGBT Latinos

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"Notably, many LGBT Latinos live in states, such as Florida and Texas, with few legal protections for LGBT people and families," said co-author Angeliki Kastanis, Public Policy Research Fellow at the Williams Institute. "The study highlights that public debates in these states on whether to prohibit discrimination of the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or whether to recognize the relationships of same-sex couples, impacts members of both the Latino and LGBT communities."

Other findings:

- In 63 percent of same-sex couples involving Latino/as, one of the partners is not Latino/a.
- In same-sex couples, 26 percent of Latino/a individuals have a college degree, versus 14 percent who are in different-sex couples.
- LGBT Latinos have a higher rate of unemployment (14 percent) compared to non-LGBT Latinos (11 percent). However, when only focusing on Latino/as in same-sex couples, the unemployment rate is similar to different-sex counterparts.
- Latino/a individuals in same-sex couples report higher median income than those in different-sex couples – \$28,000 vs. \$20,000. Latina females in same-sex couples report much higher income (\$27,000) than those in different-sex couples (\$11,000).
- Latino/a individuals in same-sex couples are more likely to be citizens by birth than those in different-sex couples (66% vs. 42%).
- Latino/as in same-sex couples are much more likely to be born in the U.S. than LGBT Hispanics in different-sex couples (59% vs. 36%).

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Just e-mail Sandie at svrichard@cox.net to send you the PFLAG newsletter by e-mail only.

## Chapter Meetings

PFLAG/Greater Providence meets the first Wednesday of each month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.:

The MET School  
325 Public Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

## Upcoming Meetings

February 5, 2014  
March, 5, 2014  
April 2, 2014  
May 7, 2014

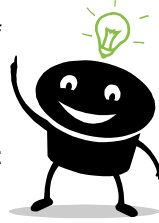
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www.PFLAGprovidence.org  
Email: PFLAGprovidence@gmail.com

## Ideas for Topics/Speakers?

If you have a specific topic you would like to have addressed by a speaker or know of anyone whom you would like to recommend as a speaker for our Chapter, please contact **Scott** at **scmpmr33@gmail.com**.



(401) 421-5626  
info@youthprideri.org  
http://www.youthprideri.org

## Blogs of Interest

**Faith Topics**  
Susan Cottrell  
http://www.FreedHearts.org

Kathy Baldock  
http://www.canyonwalkerconnections.com

**LGBTQ Issues**  
Think Progress  
http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/issue/

The Huffington Post  
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/lgbt-blogs

**Parenting a Transgender Child**  
Gender Mom  
http://gendermom.wordpress.com/

Raising My Rainbow  
http://raisingmyrainbow.com/



## Member Resources

**Rhode Island Bi Resource Network**  
http://www.ribinetwork.org  
http://www.facebook.com/TheOtherBWord

**SAGE Rhode Island**  
235 Promenade Street, Suite 500, Box 18  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-528-3259  
http://www.sageusa.org

**TGI Network of Rhode Island**  
PO Box 40365  
Providence, RI 02940  
info@tginetwork.org  
(401) 441-5058 (voicemail)

**Youth Pride, Inc.**  
743 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903



**Greater  
Providence  
Chapter**

## Membership Application

**Yes! I want to be a supporting member of PFLAG.**

Please provide the information requested below and make your check payable to: PFLAG/Greater Providence. You may bring this form with your payment to the next chapter meeting or mail to: PFLAG, c/o 500 Angell Street, Apt. 212, Providence, RI 02906.

- Household \$30       Individual \$25       Student/Limited Income \$15  
 Newsletter Only \$10       Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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I'll do my part to help save a tree. Please send me the newsletter via email only (.pdf format).



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