



Buffalo / Niagara

P. O. Box 617
Buffalo, NY 14207

716-883-0384

pflag@bfn.org
www.pflag-buffalo-niagara.org

We meet because we have learned that someone very close to us is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgendered.

We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner.

Although we do not agree at all times, we try to be understanding.

We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others.

We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable for all of us.

We encourage all to attend meetings for their own benefit as well as that of the group.

It is our hope that when each of us reaches a point of understanding and acceptance, we realize that this is when others need us the most.

Buffalo Monthly Meeting

Sunday, February 17, 2008
2:30 – 5:00 PM

The February meeting will be a self help sharing meeting. As always, newcomers will be offered the alternative of meeting privately with a PFLAG parent.

Heritage Room, Westminster Presbyterian Church
724 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209

Use the driveway to left of the church to reach the church parking lot. Walk behind the church to other side of the building (through the nursery school) and enter through the kitchen entrance.

New Parents Meetings

Wednesday, February 13, 2008
Wednesday, March 12, 2007
7:00 PM

If you plan to attend, you must notify us by calling the helpline.

Christ United Methodist Church Library
350 Saratoga (corner of Harlem Road), Snyder, NY
North of the Harlem Road exit of Route 33

Enter through door closest to the lighted parking lot.
This self-help one-on-one meeting deals with the concerns of parents and family members who have recently learned that a loved one is Lesbian or Gay.

For Niagara satellite meeting details, call 297-5785.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Buffalo/Niagara, is a non-profit, all volunteer, community-based organization not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic, or political group. Membership is open to all. PFLAG membership lists are kept confidential; and mailings are sent in plain envelopes.

Queer Journeys Programs

Queer Journeys is a cable access program sponsored by PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara and coordinated by Camille Cox and Babs Conant. The programs are based on documentaries on GLBT issues. This program only airs in Buffalo, on Mondays at 6:30 pm and Tuesdays at 1:00 am on Adelphia Channel 20.

The schedule for the next two months is:

- Feb 4: Maybe We're Talking About a Different God / The Preacher's Son
- Feb 11: Mom, Dad, ... I'm Gay
- Feb 18: Making History in Massachusetts
- Feb 25: Safe School Program for Youth in Massachusetts
- Mar 3: Safe School Program for Youth in Massachusetts
- Mar 10: A Little Respect
- Mar 17: Choosing Children, Pt 1
- Mar 24: Choosing Children, Pt 2
- Mar 31: Our Brother, Dan

A short description of the storylines and a full schedule can be found on our website at: www.pflag-buffalo-niagara.org/video_project.shtml

Education & Programs



Gay rights 101

Kevin Naff, The Washington Blade

"WOW, THERE'S A lot to be angry about."

That was the reaction recently from a local gay high school student who was reading the Blade for the first time, earnestly poring over articles about hate crimes, employment discrimination and rising HIV rates.

He seemed genuinely surprised that life for ordinary, grown-up gay Americans didn't necessarily involve the corporate jobs, Prada shoes and stylish apartments made famous by the "Will & Grace" episodes he grew up watching.

But teenagers aren't the only ones in need of an education on gay reality. During the debate over the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, it became clear that many members of Congress, including some freshman Democrats, remain woefully ignorant about our issues. Collectively, openly gay people have done a poor job of educating those around us about the inequalities we face.

Too many gay people come out to family and friends and then never speak of it again. Unfortunately, it's not enough to merely come out; those of us living openly and honestly must take it to a new level.

Chatting with gay-friendly next-door neighbors last week, the subject of marriage surfaced. The straight, married couple was surprised to discover that same-sex

relationships are not recognized under the law. And I was surprised that they didn't already know that.

The conversation served as a reminder that gays take their straight allies for granted and that many of them know very little about the obstacles and discrimination we face in everyday life.

Let us review some basics about the status of the gay rights movement so we can better educate our most important supporters.

In 30 states, it remains legal to fire an employee based on sexual orientation; in 38 states, it is legal to fire a person for being transgender.

Those numbers should scare straight workers, too, because they are not protected if a boss perceives them to be gay and then fires them. Gays and lesbians are not covered under federal non-discrimination laws. The U.S. House passed ENDA this month, after a transgender provision was removed from the bill, marking the first time in history that either chamber has approved such a measure. The earliest incarnation of ENDA dates to the 1970s, when Rep. Bella Abzug introduced a bill to bar discrimination against gays. Congress is still debating the issue more than 30 years later. Despite the House passage, a version has not yet been introduced in the Senate and White House advisers have publicly recommended that President Bush veto the bill should it reach his desk.

ENDA exempts small employers and the military, meaning the armed forces can continue to expel openly gay and lesbian service members. More than 12,000 gay men and women have been kicked out of the military since President Bill Clinton signed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 1993, including dozens of Arabic speaking linguists desperately needed after the 9/11 attacks. Many of our allies, including Great Britain, Canada and Israel already permit open gays to serve in the military.

There is no federal recognition of same-sex relationships, creating myriad problems for gay couples. The federal government bestows more than 1,100 rights and responsibilities on straight married couples, including rights related to Social Security benefits, immigration and filing joint taxes. Gay couples — even those married legally in Massachusetts — are not entitled to any of those rights.

Only one state permits gay marriage. Four others have enacted civil unions, including New Jersey, Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire. California, Oregon, Maine, Washington and Washington, D.C., have enacted domestic partnership laws that extend some rights of marriage, such as hospital visitation to gay couples. And Hawaii offers limited rights to gay couples. Twenty-six states now have constitutional amendments limiting marriage to heterosexual couples; another 19 states have codified straight-only marriage in state law. In addition, same-sex couples are barred from adopting children in Florida, Mississippi and Utah; an adoption ban effort is currently underway in Arkansas.

Gays are not covered under federal hate crimes laws, even though newly released FBI statistics show that gays are disproportionately the targets of such attacks. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation rose by 1.3 percent in 2006, according to the FBI, and account for 15.5 percent of all hate crimes reported, even though the overall gay population is estimated to be far smaller than that.

The House passed a bill to add sexual orientation to the federal hate crimes law earlier this year. The Senate attached the measure as an amendment to the defense authorization bill, which President Bush has vowed to veto.

HIV-positive foreigners are legally barred from entering the country, making the U.S. one of just 13 countries in the world, including Sudan and Saudi Arabia, to ban travel for people with the disease.

Gay Americans are barred from sponsoring their foreign partners for immigration, forcing thousands of bi-national same-sex couples to choose between love and country.

The mainstream media work hard to keep gays and lesbians in the closet. Gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans characters account for just 1.1 percent of all scripted characters on the five broadcast networks, according to GLAAD. And mainstream news outlets don't fare much better, routinely declining to report on the sexual orientation of gay celebrities like Jodie Foster, Queen Latifah and Anderson Cooper. Even the obituaries of openly gay figures like Susan Sontag and Ismail Merchant frequently omitted any mention of their partners.

And the plight of gays around the world remains bleak. Gays in Iran face execution; Iraqi gays have been lured in chat rooms to meetings where they are beaten. Gays attempting to march in Poland and Russia have been physically attacked and arrested over the past few years. Homosexuality is outlawed in Nigeria, where gays living in the Muslim-dominated north can face the death penalty. A more recent proposed law makes it a crime to watch gay-themed TV shows or read gay literature and gays are even barred from dining together in public. India has a sodomy law that can bring a 10-year prison sentence to anyone convicted of having gay sex.

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Newspapers and many other sources are filled with such stories each week. Yes, the gay rights movement has progressed quickly, but so much work lies ahead. Help make sure gay allies understand the discrimination we face.

Indeed, there is a lot to be angry about.

What Does It All Mean?

There are dozens of new terms that you might see on the PFLAG site or the websites of our allies and colleagues. Here are a few helpful definitions to get you started.

GLBT: Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. This acronym is used to refer to these individuals collectively. (It is sometimes stated as LGBT.) Occasionally, the acronym is stated as GLBTA to include allies – straight and supportive individuals – in the community.

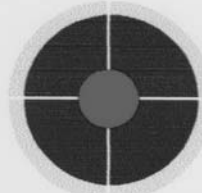
Sexual Orientation: Enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings to other people. Heterosexual (straight) individuals experience these feelings primarily for people of the opposite sex. Homosexual (gay or lesbian) individuals experience these feelings primarily for people of the same sex. Bisexual (bi) individuals experience these feelings for people of both sexes.

Gender Identity: A person's sense of being male or female; resulting from a combination of genetic and environmental influences. Awareness of gender identity is usually experienced in infancy and reinforced in adolescence.

Gender expression: A person's way of communicating gender identity to others.

Transgender: A broad term describing the state of a person's gender identity which does not necessarily match his/her assigned gender at birth. Other words commonly used are female to male, male to female, crossdresser, drag queen or king, gender queer, gender blender, two-spirit, and androgyny. Click here for more information on transgender issues.

Intersex: individuals born with chromosomal anomalies or ambiguous genitalia. The medical term "hermaphrodite" has been used, but is not accepted by many intersex people. Medical professionals commonly assign a male or female gender to the individual and proceed to perform gender assignment surgeries beginning in infancy and often continuing into



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adolescence, before a child is able to give informed consent. The Intersex Society of North America (www.isna.org) opposes this practice of genital mutilation on infants and children.

Advocacy & Issues



Family Issues – Immigration Equality

Bill Name: Uniting American Families Act

Bill Numbers: Has not yet been introduced in the 110th Congress

What this bill will do:

The Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to include the term "permanent partner" to the act's definition of family members. It would promote equality by allowing U.S. citizens to sponsor their same-sex partners for green cards and immigrant visas, something already available to opposite-sex spouses and other family members.

What you need to ask for:

Since this legislation has not yet been introduced, it is critical that this step happens. If your representative was one of the previous cosponsors of the bill, ask him or her to urge Rep. Nadler and Sen. Leahy to introduce the Uniting American Families Act. If he or she was not one of the previous cosponsors, ask your legislator to become a cosponsor of the UAFA.

PFLAG Talking Points:

The U.S. immigration system is built on a principle of family unification – don't leave our families members out of the system.

This bill will help loving same-sex couples keep their families together without living in fear of separation, harassment, or deportation.

Sixteen countries—including most of our key allies and trading partners—provide immigration benefits to same-sex couples: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa,

Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Notes:

In the 108th Congress, the UAFA was known as the Permanent Partners Immigration Act (PPIA).

In the 109th Congress, the UAFA was introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY).

In the 109th Congress, the Senate bill (S1278) had 13 cosponsors, while its House companion (HR 3006) had 115 cosponsors.

HRC Update

Joe Solmonese, President, Human Rights Campaign

The excitement on the 2008 campaign trail continues to rise, and the Human Rights Campaign is on the ground making sure that the GLBT community plays an influential and visible role.

HRC partnered with Florida Red and Blue to hold a series of educational trainings throughout the state in advance of the presidential primary on January 29th. The trainings mobilized volunteers and gave them the tools they need to engage voters as they prepare to campaign for fair-minded candidates.

Participants in the trainings also learned how to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage and eliminate all domestic partnerships in Florida. Since same-sex marriage is already illegal under state law, the proposed amendment would needlessly write discrimination into Florida's state constitution. The amendment could appear on the November ballot.

We held trainings in Orlando and Ft. Lauderdale, which attracted a sizable crowd and media attention. I was lucky enough to attend these first two trainings. Additional trainings were held in Palm Beach, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Gainesville and Pensacola.*

Since October, HRC been teaming with Stonewall Democrats of Southern Nevada, Women's Empowerment Network, the LGBT Center of Southern Nevada and other progressive organizations to mobilize and engage the state's GLBT community in preparation for that state's caucuses. On the eve of the Nevada caucuses, a GLBT rally was held in Las Vegas. Speakers at the rally

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY
Tickets & info: 883-1277

www.buffalogaymenschorus.org

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included Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, Mayor of Los Angeles Antonio Villaraigosa, State Senator Dina Titus, Megan Jones of the ONE Campaign, Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani, openly gay Assembly member David Parks, Law Professor and LGBT Chair for the Obama Campaign Tobias Wolff, and "Grey's Anatomy" actress Kate Walsh. In addition to the rally, Regional Field Director Georgie Aguirre-Sacasa represented HRC at the MSNBC Democratic presidential debate on "Hispanic-African American Issues."

HRC has staffers on the ground in New Mexico working to raise awareness and build support for the Domestic Partnership Rights and Responsibilities Act, legislation that would give certain unmarried couples, same- or opposite-sex, the rights and benefits of married couples. During his State of the State speech, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson urged his state's legislature to approve the bill. Richardson said in his remarks, "As a state whose diversity is its strength, we cannot accept discrimination in any form." With continued hard work and Gov. Richardson's commitment to equality, the bill could be enacted during the upcoming legislative session.

As always, you can read dispatches from staffers and view photos of the action on the HRC Back Story blog (www.hrcbackstory.org).

HRC Back Story is a great source for all the latest information on HRC's activities and you can also hear in-depth political conversation on our XM Radio show, *The Agenda*. The show airs on Mondays at 6 p.m. EST on XM channel 120. A recent show was particularly interesting—we talked to Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization of Women, about the role of gender in the presidential race, editor-at-large of *The New Republic* Peter Beinart about terrorism, and HRC's own Georgie Aguirre-Sacasa about all the action in advance of the Nevada caucuses. To learn more about the show or to listen to audio archives, visit *The Agenda* website at theAgendaOnXM.org.

Marriages, Civil Unions Collide In Court

Hillel Y. Levin, *The Hartford Courant*

A pending decision by the Connecticut Supreme Court will determine whether Connecticut must recognize same-sex marriage. California's highest court will address the same issue later in the year. Although these cases look similar to other lawsuits around the country, they could mark the beginning of a much more complicated stage in the shaping of laws concerning same-sex couples.

The first stage of legal developments concerning same-sex marriage is essentially over. The central question so far has been how any given state would define marriage. Four distinct approaches have emerged. One state, Massachusetts, recognizes same-sex marriage. Several others have created new legal regimes

for same-sex couples (like civil unions in Connecticut and domestic partnerships in California) that are very much like marriage. A third group has extended only a few of the rights and responsibilities of marriage to same-sex couples. Finally, many more states have rejected legal recognition for same-sex couples.

But what happens when these different laws collide, for example, when a same-sex couple that married in Massachusetts moves to a state that only recognizes civil unions? Does their legal relationship dissolve at the border? What about custody of children? Inheritance? Divorce? The legal term for these questions is "conflicts of law." Such conflicts will dominate future legal arguments about same-sex marriage.

The Connecticut and California cases are among the first to raise conflicts issues. The courts in these states are now considering whether the marriage-like alternatives offered to same-sex couples meet constitutional guarantees of equality. The lower courts have concluded that civil unions and domestic partnerships are identical to marriage in all ways except for name, and so they are equal under the law. As a Connecticut judge put it, "civil union and marriage in Connecticut now share the same benefits, protections and responsibilities under law." California's intermediate court agreed. But that's not quite right. Indeed, it is quite wrong, because these courts failed to identify and address the latent conflicts issues. Taking conflicts into account, civil unions and domestic partnerships are not equal to marriage.

When a "traditional" (i.e. opposite-sex) married couple moves from Massachusetts to Connecticut, Connecticut automatically recognizes the marriage. But if a married same-sex couple tries to do the same, Connecticut will not recognize the marriage, and will not even treat the couple as having entered into a civil union.

This might do nothing more than impose a bureaucratic headache on the couple, requiring them to fill out the paperwork necessary to enter into a civil union. But it could also be disastrous. If one spouse falls ill and must be hospitalized before they fill out the paperwork, then the other spouse apparently would not be empowered to make end-of-life decisions. Similarly, if one spouse dies, custody of any children would be in doubt, as would inheritance issues. This result makes no sense given that the Connecticut legislature has chosen to allow, and even encourage, same-sex couples to enter into committed legal relationships.

It really does matter, then, whether you call it marriage or something else.

If they are committed to equality, the Connecticut and California courts should reject the conclusions of the lower courts and rule in one of two ways. First, they could declare that legal equality can only be achieved by doing away with civil unions and allowing same-sex couples to get married. Alternatively, they could hold that a married

same-sex couple that moves from Massachusetts must automatically be considered to have entered into a civil union or domestic partnership. Either approach would put marriage and the alternative institutions on essentially equal legal footing.

Such questions have begun to show up in courts around the country, including in Rhode Island, New York and Virginia, but judges have ducked them. For example, the Rhode Island Supreme Court ruled that a same-sex couple married in Massachusetts could not obtain a divorce in Rhode Island, where they resided, but did so without engaging in any conflicts analysis.

The Connecticut and California courts could avoid the conflicts questions raised by the pending cases by declaring them unripe or ignoring them. But by addressing the questions head-on, these courts could set the course for future development of the law and simultaneously help thousands of committed couples throughout the country begin to understand their legal status.

It's A Party

Mary Hewitt and PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara invite you to a birthday party fund raiser in honor of Mary's 73rd Birthday on Saturday March 1, 2008 from 5 – 8 PM.

Invitations will be sent to WNY members and friends of PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara with more details. If you do not receive an invitation, call PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara (883-0384) for more information.

Mary requests donations to PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara in lieu of gifts.

Get Support

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you are just starting to learn about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people (or if you are one) there are hundreds of questions you may have. Below are just a few of the most frequently asked questions that people ask as they start on their journey of acceptance.

How can I get support after a GLBT loved one has come out to me?

PFLAG offers local support and education all across the country. Members in PFLAG chapters know what you're going through and can help. You may be experiencing an array of emotions such as grief, guilt, and denial, and you could be facing new questions about your relationship with your GLBT loved one. Whatever your reaction, remember that your loved one is sharing one part of

his/her identity with you and is ultimately the same person as yesterday.

How are sexual orientation and gender identity determined?

No one knows exactly how sexual orientation and gender identity determined. However, experts agree that it is a complicated matter of genetics, biology, psychological and social factors. For most people, sexual orientation and gender identity are shaped at any early age. While research has not determined a cause, homosexuality and gender variance are not the result of any one factor like parenting or past experiences. It is never anyone's "fault" if they or their loved one grows up to be GLBT.

If you are asking yourself why you or your loved one is GLBT, consider asking yourself another question: Why ask why? Does your response to a GLBT person depend on knowing why they are GLBT? Regardless of cause, GLBT people deserve equal rights and to be treated fairly.

Is there something wrong with being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

No. There have been people in all cultures and times throughout human history who have identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT). Homosexuality is not an illness or a disorder, a fact that is agreed upon by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association. Homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association in 1974. Being transgender or gender variant is not a disorder either, although Gender Identity Dysphoria (GID) is still listed in the DSM of the American Psychiatric Association. Being GLBT is as much a human variation as being left-handed - a person's sexual orientation and gender identity are just another piece of who they are. There is nothing wrong with being GLBT - in fact, there's a lot to celebrate.

Discriminatory laws, policies and attitudes that persist in our schools, workplaces, places of worship and larger communities, however, are wrong and hurt GLBT people and their loved ones. PFLAG works to make sure that GLBT people have full civil rights and can live openly, free from discrimination and violence.

Can gay people change their sexual orientation or gender identity?

No – and efforts to do so aren't just unnecessary – they're damaging. Religious and secular organizations do sponsor campaigns and studies claiming that GLBT people can change their sexual orientation or gender identity because there is something wrong. PFLAG believes that it is our anti-GLBT attitudes, laws and policies that need to change, not our GLBT loved ones.

These studies and campaigns suggesting that GLBT people can change are based on ideological biases and not peer-reviewed solid science. No studies show proven long-term changes in gay or transgender people, and

many reported changes are based solely on behavior and not a person's actual self-identity. The American Psychological Association has stated that scientific evidence shows that reparative therapy (therapy which claims to change GLBT people) does not work and that it can do more harm than good. You can learn more about why these efforts are so harmful at:

www.pflag.org/Reparative_Therapy.exgay.0.html

How does someone know they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

Some people say that they have "felt different" or knew they were attracted to people of the same sex from the time they were very young. Some transgender people talk about feeling from an early age that their gender identity did not match parental and social expectations. Others do not figure out their sexual orientation or gender identity until they are adolescents or adults. Often it can take a while for people to put a label to their feelings, or people's feelings may change over time.

Understanding our sexuality and gender can be a lifelong process, and people shouldn't worry about labeling themselves right away. However, with positive images of GLBT people more readily available, it is becoming easier for people to identify their feelings and come out at earlier ages. People don't have to be sexually active to know their sexual orientation - feelings and emotions are as much a part of one's identity. The short answer is that you'll know when you know.

Should I talk to a loved one about his or her sexual orientation or gender identity before the person talks to me?

It's seldom appropriate to ask a person, "Are you gay?" Your perception of another person's sexual orientation (gay or straight) or gender identity (male or female) is not necessarily what it appears.

No one can know for sure unless the person has actually declared that they are gay, straight, bisexual, or transgender. PFLAG recommends creating a safe space by showing your support of GLBT issues on a non-personal level. For example, take an interest in openly discussing and learning about topics such as same-sex marriage or GLBT rights in the workplace. Learn about GLBT communities and culture. Come out as an ally, regardless of if your friend or loved one is GLBT.

Read PFLAG's *Dos and Don'ts for Friends and Families* to get some tips should the "coming out day" happen. Your ultimate goal is to provide a safe space for your loved one to approach you when he or she is ready without fear of negative consequences.

www.pflag.org/Dos_and_Don_ts_For_Family_and_Friends.do_dont.0.html

How do I come out to my family and friends?

There are many questions to consider before coming out. Are you comfortable with your sexuality and gender identity/expression? Do you have support? Can you be

patient? What kind of views do your friends and family have about homosexuality and gender variance? Are you financially dependent on your family? Make sure you have thought your decision through, have a plan and supportive people you can turn to. Just as you needed to experience different stages of acceptance for yourself, family and loved ones may well need to go through a similar process.

PFLAG was founded because of the unconditional love of parents for their gay children. Your loved ones will need time to adjust to your news, the same way you may have needed time to come to terms with yourself. However, true acceptance is possible and happens every day, especially with education and support.

PFLAG Philadelphia's *Read This Before Coming Out to Your Parents* will offer some more things to think about. Also consider talking to someone from your local PFLAG chapter for more personalized tips and support. (www.outproud.org/brochure_coming_out.html)

Can gay people have families?

Yes! GLBT people can and do have families. Same-sex couples do form committed and loving relationships. In the United States many same-sex couples choose to celebrate their love with commitment ceremonies or civil unions, although these couples are not offered the rights and benefits of marriage. More and more GLBT couples are also raising children together, although state laws on adoption and foster parenting vary. And of course, many GLBT people have the support of the loving families they were born into, or the families that they have created with their other friends and loved ones. As the saying goes, all it takes is love to make a family.

How can I reconcile my or my loved one's sexual orientation with my faith?

This is a difficult question for many people. Learning that a loved one is GLBT can be a challenge if you feel it is at odds with your faith tradition. However, being GLBT does not impact a person's ability to be moral and spiritual any more than being heterosexual does. Many GLBT people are religious and active in their own faith communities. It is up to you to explore, question and make choices in order to reconcile religion with homosexuality and gender variance. For some this means working for change within their faith community, and for others it means leaving it.

Why should I support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender equality?

GLBT rights are not special rights. PFLAG works to achieve equal civil rights for all people, including our GLBT loved ones. Our GLBT children, friends and family members deserve the same rights as our straight ones. However, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is still legal in many states, a GLBT person can be fired from their job simply because of who they love or how they express their gender, same-sex

couples cannot legally be married in the majority of states in the United States, GLBT youth face constant harassment and abuse in schools across the country, and it is clear that the road to full equality and acceptance is a long one.

Because of all of these realities, PFLAG needs you to stand up and join us in our work to move equality forward.

Your loved one needs you to take a stand for fairness. By being open about yourself and your family you are already helping to dispel misinformation and fear. You can take the next step by joining PFLAG as we support, educate and advocate for a better world.

For more information:

- Locate a PFLAG chapter near you at: www.pflag.org/189.html

- Learn more about how PFLAG works on legislative issues at www.pflag.org/Issues.103.0.html
- Learn more about how PFLAG works on education issues at www.pflag.org/Programs.programs.0.html
- PFLAG offers a number of resources in the area of faith, including our *Welcoming Faith Communities* project at www.pflag.org/Welcoming_Faith_Communities.faith.0.html
- Learn about how you can advocate to overcome barriers to GLBT people having families at www.pflag.org/Family_Issues.267.0.html

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2007 – 2008

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wed 2/13 PFLAG New Parents meeting.
 Sun 2/17 PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara monthly meeting.
 Tue 2/19 PFLAG St. Catharines, Ontario monthly meeting. www.pflag.ca/StCatharines.htm
 Wed 3/12 PFLAG New Parents meeting.
 Sun 3/16 PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara monthly meeting.
 Tue 3/18 PFLAG St. Catharines, Ontario monthly meeting. www.pflag.ca/StCatharines.htm

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara Chapter – 2008 Membership

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