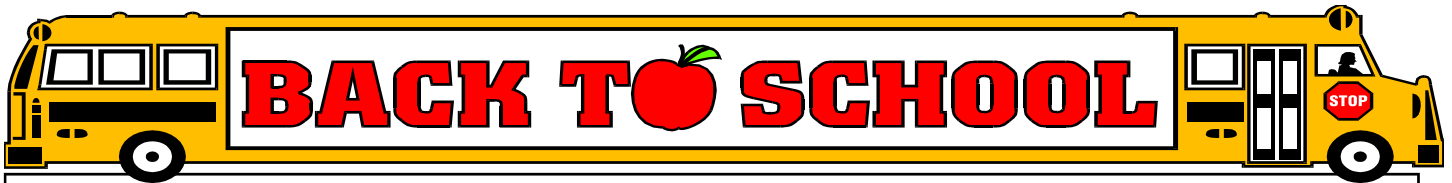




Pride and Joy *Families*

A Publication of the Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project
124 Front St Binghamton NY 13905
607.724.4308 www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

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Making the Most of Your Child's Education

Your child's school or childcare program may never have encountered a family like yours and may not know that you exist, what you need, what to call you or how to treat you and your children. And most important, they may not be aware that the curriculum excludes you.

Parents are advocates for their children. As gay and lesbian parents, it is primarily up to you, in partnership with the school personnel, to ensure that your child's school and/or childcare program is or becomes a safe and supportive place for your children and your family.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

- **Determine your level of comfort in being open.** For a variety of reasons including custody issues, job security and personal safety, you may choose to be less open. Become as empowered and informed as you can so that when an opportunity arises you will be prepared to take a step.
- **Be as open as possible about your relationship.** School personnel can not be supportive about family situations that they have no knowledge about. If you choose to label your partner as "aunt" or "roommate", etc. the school does not know you are a gay or lesbian headed family and may see no reason to incorporate information into the curriculum. (continued on page 3)

In this Issue...

- Pride and Joy Events
- New Family Pride Guide
- National Coming Out Day
- Back to School Jitters
- Is Your \$ Gay Friendly?

Rainbow Photo at the

Annual Picnic

Please wear any solid color shirt

Sunday September 17, at Dorchester Park

Who Are We?

The Lesbian and Gay Family Building project is funded by a grant from the New York State Health Department and is committed to building and strengthening LGBT families.

National Coming Out Day!

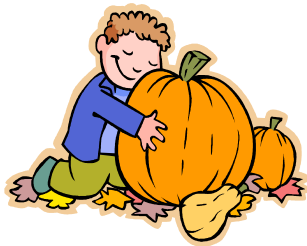
Wednesday October 11

National Coming Out Day commemorates October 11, 1987 when 500,000 people marched on Washington DC for Lesbian and Gay equality. The annual coming out day events are aimed at raising awareness of the LGBT community among the general population in an effort to give a familiar face to the LGBT rights movement.



Monday, September 26, 7:30-9 pm - "Back-to-School" Meeting, UU Congregation, 183 Riverside Drive, Binghamton. The LGBT Concerns Committee of the Binghamton UU Congregation will host an informal discussion about how to support members of the LGBT community in schools, including kids with gay parents.

LGBT parents are invited to join the conversation!



Pumpkin Picking and Potluck
Saturday September 30
Syracuse
(see calendar for details)

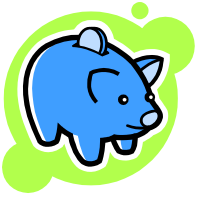
www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

Visit us for:

- LGBT Parenting Resources
 - Vince's View
 - Upcoming Events
 - News and Information



Maggie's Money Matters



Dear Maggie,
I want to spend my hard earned dollars in ways that support the LGBT community. How can I find

out which businesses and companies are doing their part for LGBT equality?

—Blind Spender

Dear Blind,

There is a way to get involved and

contribute to the LGBT cause without changing much about the way you live.

The Human Rights Campaign (aka HRC) has released their 2006 Buying Guide "Buying for Equality". The guide provides you with the information you need to make decisions about which companies to support based on their treatment of their LGBT employees. Each business gets a number rating based on their inclusive anti-discrimination

policies for LGBT employees. The listing makes it possible to see which companies are making strides for LGBT equality and which ones still have some work to do.

To view or download the guide or to request a hard copy to be mailed to you, visit the equality in the workplace sections of the HRC website at: www.hrc.org/buyersguide.

Did You Know?

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2005 [Corporate Equality Index \(CEI\)](#) found that a record 101 companies scored a perfect 100 percent – more than seven times as many since the first CEI was published in 2002. Despite successes in the workplace, it is still legal in 34 states to fire a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender employee for no reason other than who they are. Many companies still have a long way to go to ensure equality for all employees.



www.transparency.org

An online community dedicated to transgender parents and their families.

Making the Most of your Child's Education cont.

Find a way to contribute to your children's school community. The single best way to become accepted in a school community is to be a presence. Devote as much time as you can spare - at least a few hours over the course of a year- to PTA meetings, committees, classrooms, trips, tutoring or potlucks. Let people know you and your children as individuals.

Provide your children's school with appropriate language and resources. Tell the teachers who is in your family and the names your children use to identify them , and provide a glossary of correct terms for lesbian and gay families. Give the library a list of books, videos and other resource materials.

Be sensitive to the ever-changing needs of your children. At some point children need some control over what is said, when, and to whom. Pay attention to his/her signals and consult with your child about these issues.

This article has been adapted from "Opening Doors; Lesbian and Gay parents and Schools" a Project of the Educational Advocacy Committee of the Family Pride Coalition.

Healthy Families

Routine a must for Family Health



When you were growing up, did your family eat dinner together? Did you go on family vacations? In Barbara J. Fiese's 2002 article "A Review of 50 Years of Research on Naturally Occurring Family Routines and Rituals: Cause for Celebration?" The Syracuse University professor and author shows a review of 32 studies and affirms that such family routines and family rituals are associated with personal identity, academic achievement, children's health and stronger family relationships. One study found that children who had regular bedtime routines got to sleep sooner and woke up less frequently during the night than those with less regular routines.

Barbara H. Fiese, Ph.D., distinguished between a family routine and a family ritual in the following way. "Routines involve instrumental communication conveying information that 'this is what needs to be done' and involve a momentary time commitment so that once the act is completed, there is little if any after-thought."

Rituals, on the other hand, involve symbolic communication and convey 'this is who we are' as a group and provide continuity in meaning across generations," according to Dr. Fiese. Also, there is an emotional imprint where once the act is completed, the individual may replay it in memory to recapture some of the positive experience.

The author suggests these routines and rituals which may improve your family's health and well-being:

- If possible, try to have at least two of three family meals each week
- Plan family vacations at least once a year
- Consider starting a new family ritual for holidays if old ones are no longer occurring
- Enforce bedtimes. Especially with younger children
- Give children an allowance that represents their portion of the family income
- Assign children chores that represent their portion of the family labor
- Reference: "Barbara H. Fiese, A Review of 50 years of Research on Naturally occurring Family Routines and Rituals: Cause for Celebration?," Syracuse University; Journal of Family Psychology, Vol.16, No.4.

(Re) Introducing Gregory Bain...

Gregory Bain joined the Ferre Institute, Inc. as a student intern in August 2006. He is a student in the Graduate School at Binghamton University seeking a Masters Degree in Social Work. Greg will work on several projects during his 2006-2007 internship, including an effort to create special programs geared for the older kids in our Pride and Joy Families groups. Many of you will remember Gregory's contributions to our 2005 Pride and Joy Families Weekend Conference last November as technical coordinator and as part of our planning committee. Welcome back Greg!

Interested in the groups forming for older kids with LGBT parents? See page 8 for details!

What's the Pride and Joy Families BUZZ?



Binghamton- We all had a good time at the "Pride Picnic" - our annual part in the Binghamton Pride Celebration weekend. We also produced an outdoor screening of "In My Shoes" a documentary about kids with LGBT parents. We are looking forward to our favorite Fall activities and some parents only time too.



Syracuse- Our group started off the summer by being the Grand Marshalls in the Syracuse Pride Parade and Festival. We marched behind our hand crafted Pride and Joy Families banner and the kids rode in a convertible. Later in the summer, we met for an indoor picnic (despite thunderstorms) and had a ball playing and eating together. We'll be going to Tim's Pumpkin Patch again this year and having a Thanksgiving Feast!



Ithaca-Our Family Dance in the Spring was an exciting way to meet other LGBT families to hang out with. We met up again for a picnic on a hot day in July and had a catered meal at Common Ground. Our Fall Calendar is shaping up, let us know if you would like to host a Thanksgiving Feast in November!



Rochester- The showing of "In My Shoes" was a successful in rejuvenating our group. At the Rochester Pride Picnic we made plans to start up a group for the older kids of LGBT parents and continue with fun and educational events for families with kids of all ages. Our August potluck picnic was a big success and we can't wait for Fall!

Vince's View

at www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

Vince Sgambati, a former teacher and continuing writer has been hard at work with his candid, oftentimes humorous column about what it's like for two gay men to raise a daughter .

His blog-form column "Vince's View" features his newest article, "What's Kids got to do with it ?" The piece analyzes the recent rulings on gay marriage through his own and his daughters eyes. Sgambati continues to be introspective while encouraging us to take a look into our our lives and what affect the government decisions have on our families.

Vince's View can be found at www.PrideandJoyFamilies.org

Vince Sgambati lives in Syracuse with his partner, Jack, of 30 years; their daughter, Mona; his mother, Millie; their dog, Dusty; and a quinea pig, lightning. Vince, Jack and Mona are active Pride and Joy members.



Parent Alert:

Do not Assume that your Child's Social Security Records are Accurate!

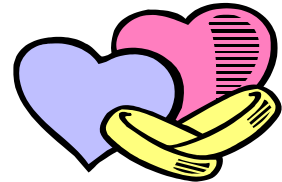
We in New York are fortunate to live in a state that permits second parent adoption* and many of our families have taken advantage of that right. The primary reason for going through this process is to ensure that our kids have access to both parents' health insurance and other benefits, including Social Security benefits.

Do not assume, however, that your child's Social Security records are accurate or have been updated to reflect the fact that they have two legal parents. One of our families recently had a dreadful experience at the Social Security Administration (SSA) office in Binghamton, NY, in which the parents were told that their child "had to have a father" in order to match the form on the computer screen. The women had to return later with their attorney before the bureaucrat-in-charge relented and permitted one of the moms to be listed as "father" on the outdated federal form.

We've contacted the New York Civil Liberties Union in Syracuse and hope to have a legal statement for LGBT-led families to bring with them to their local SSA office so they're not turned away like these women were.

*Second parent adoption allows children with same-sex parents to have a fully sanctioned and legally defined relationship with each of their parents. New York is one of 9 states that permit second parent adoption.

Equal Marriage and Family Rights in New York State: 'Tis the season to vote!



The New York State Court of Appeals made at least one thing clear in their July 6th decision denying marriage equality to same sex couples: that LGBT people must now turn to our elected representatives to grant us the civil rights that have been guaranteed to all New Yorkers by our state's constitution. Elected officials and political candidates need to hear from LGBT-led families, in the voting booth and in their offices, that we too require access to the 1,000+ protections automatically bestowed by civil marriage, just like heterosexual couples.

Want to participate in the Pride and Joy Families' effort to talk about our families with elected officials and political candidates? Announce your interest on the Pride and Joy listserv or call the office at 607.724.4308 ext. 21.

Not sure where the candidates stand on issues that are important to you? Contact local candidates directly and/or visit www.PrideAgenda.org. The Empire State Pride Agenda's website has voting records of incumbents and candidate endorsements.

Not sure whether you're registered to vote? Need a voter registration form? Contact your local Board of Elections office by phone or online. October 13 is the last day to postmark your application to vote in the general election (must be received by October 18).

Not sure whether or why LGBT couples and their children need the protections afforded by civil marriage? Visit www.prideagenda.org/briefingpackets/marriage/marriage.html

www.millionformarriage.org

Petition drive by the Human Rights campaign to mobilize a million voices in support of civil marriage for LGBT people. Check it Out!

Family Week 2006 A Summertime Success!

Approximately one dozen Pride and Joy Families, along with 600+ other LGBT-led families from around the country, spent a sun-drenched week in August on the tip of Cape Cod at the 12th annual Family Week, cosponsored by Family Pride Coalition and Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE). We marched together proudly in the Family Parade (behind our new, beautiful, professionally-crafted, 7-ft. banner!) on Sunday afternoon, flanked by cheering crowds on Commercial Street. On Tuesday evening, Jack and Vince and Mona (Syracuse P&J) hosted a lovely potluck dinner for the second year in a row. More than 20 families attended, saw old friends, met new folks, ate well (and brought mountains of sand into our very gracious host family's small apartment). Parents talked with one another, kids played and wrestled on the beach and splashed around in the harbor under the setting sun. It was a great time. Thanks again, to our hosts, Jack and Vince and Mona.



Annual Pride and Joy Families

Thanksgiving Feasts

In November

A day of fun, feasting, and families

See the calendar or call (607) 724-4308

For a feast near you



Don't Forget to

Vote Nov 7

Because Our Families Matter



Calling all Families with KIDS ages 9 to 14!

The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project is dedicated to supporting and informing ALL members of LGBT-led families, including our children who may be "aging out" of our traditional Pride and Joy family gatherings. While our kids certainly still need the supportive atmosphere of those gatherings, by the age of 9 or so, they also need some programming all their own.



Enter COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere). COLAGE is a national organization based in San Francisco, CA that "engages, connects and empowers people to make the world a better place for children of LGBT parents and families." They do wonderful childrens' programs during Family Week in Provincetown, MA and have chapters all over the country. They also have a fabulous website, which kids and parents should check out: www.colage.org.

If there is enough interest among our existing Pride and Joy Families groups, we plan to launch COLAGE groups in various locations around New York State. Gregory Bain, our MSW Student Intern, will support and assist these efforts, but we will need several parent facilitators to help program and keep the ball rolling for years to come.

Do you have a child or children between the ages of 9 and 14? Do you think they would enjoy participating in their own group with its own programs? Would you like more information? Please contact Claudia or Karen at LesGayFamBldg@aol.com or call 607.724.4308 with questions, concerns and/or the names and ages of your children.

Pride and Joy Families of Rochester is going

Apple Picking

Saturday September 23

11:00am

at Hurd Orchards in Hilton

(see calendar or listserv for details)

