

A PUBLICATION OF THE
LESBIAN AND GAY FAMILY
BUILDING PROJECT

Pride and Joy Families

Helping LGBT people in New York State build and strengthen their families.

Volume 5 Issue 1

Fall 2008

Pride and Joy Families Weekend Conference

April 24-26, 2009

The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project, with cosponsors Family Equality Council (formerly Family Pride Coalition) and COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere), is planning the 2009 Pride and Joy Families Weekend Conference for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) parents, prospective parents and their children in **Utica, NY on April 24-26, 2009.**

Like our previous conferences, held in Ithaca in 2001 and Binghamton in 2005, we expect this event to bring together LGBT-led families from all over upstate New York and beyond. Three hundred people are expected to attend the weekend long event at the newly-renovated Radisson Hotel in downtown Utica.

We promise an exciting weekend of meeting and socializing with other families like yours, workshops for adults about parenting and family building, great speakers, childcare/COLAGE programming for children of all ages, family activities and entertainment, a resource fair and a Family Dance! We are working to keep registration and meal costs reasonable.

Conference hotel room rates are \$109/night. We plan to offer financial support to families that need it. Utica is accessible by passenger rail service and is located on the NYS Thruway between Albany and Syracuse. Please mark your calendars and let us know that you'd like to receive additional information about the conference at our website: www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org.

Claudia Stallman
Project Director



Our keynote speaker Jennifer Chrisler from Family Equality Council and her family.

Who Are We?

The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project is funded by a grant from the New York State Health Department and works to help Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people in New York State build and strengthen their families. Our network of Pride and Joy Families provides social and educational activities and a sense of community to LGBT parents and their children.

The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project
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Claudia Stallman, Project Director
Karen Armstrong, Health Educator
Loren Couch, Program Development
Heather Hauer, Outreach Consultant
Jeffrey Sterling, Outreach Consultant

Do you have an idea for an event? Email us at www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

Our Healthy Families....



Award Helps Families' Futures by Documenting the Past

We are pleased to announce that the LGBT Healthy Families Initiative, a project of The Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project, received a Community Centered Family Health History Program Award from the Genetic Alliance.

The Community Centered Family Health History Program Award enables us to survey LGBT families about their attitudes concerning the importance of family health history and from that information, create a customized toolkit. This toolkit will contain LGBT sensitive materials for health history information collection and organization to be used in an effort to create a healthier LGBT community.

The toolkits: ***A Guide to Family Health History*** and ***A Guide to Understanding Genetics and Health*** will be finalized and mailed to everyone who participates in taking our survey "[Understanding LGBT Family Health History](#)". We will also be providing the services of a genetic counselor, who is knowledgeable about the unique structures of LGBT families. Look for your survey in your mailbox or access it online at: www.lgbthealthinitiative.org.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Download age-specific guidelines for important health screenings for LGBT men and women at www.lgbtheart.org



"The LGBT community has the highest rate of smoking of any minority group."

-New York Times 2001

Visit GaySmokeOut.net for information and the support you need to quit.

Consider coming out to your doctor. It's the most effective way to make certain that your health care needs are being addressed completely. If you don't think your doctor is LGBT friendly, go to the [Directory of Family Building Services for LGBT People](http://www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org) at www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org to find a doctor who is.

**EMPIRE STATE
PRIDE AGENDA**



Visit

www.prideagenda.org
for a 2008 primary
voter guide.

Support LGBT Rights on Election Day

The Empire State Pride Agenda is the statewide, bi-partisan civil rights and political advocacy organization dedicated to winning equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) New Yorkers and our families. We are committed to seizing all opportunities in the political and legislative processes to advance our public policy goals and pursue our public policy agenda.

Visit www.prideagenda.org to see how the candidates stand on LGBT issues.

The Family Equality Council works to ensure equality for LGBT families by building community, changing hearts and minds, and advancing social justice for all families.



It's been nearly 2 years (and 760 posts) since The Family Equality Council Blog was launched. Since then, 126,000 people from around the world have visited the blog. 1,000 comments have been made and countless ideas and viewpoints exchanged. Check out the Family Equality Council's blog at:

www.familyequality.org/blog/

www.greendadsblog.com

Who are the Green Dads? Brian and Steven, two forty-something gay fathers together over 17 years, and our five year old son Darius. We think our family is just a typical American family like any other, despite being a gay, transracial, foster-adoptive family.....

www.mombian.com

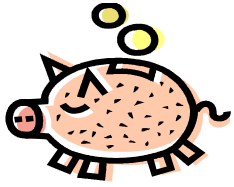
What Is Mombian?

Mombian is a lifestyle site for lesbian moms and other LGBT parents, offering a mix of parenting, politics, diversions, and resources for all our varied roles.

“Greater love hath no father than this, that a father taketh his daughter to a Jonas Brothers concert with a sellout crowd of over 16,000 people – mostly tween and teen girls. For those of you who are not fortunate enough to be drowning in adolescent pop-culture, the Jonas Brothers are shooting stars of American boy bands. My daughter’s bedroom is a shrine to their graven images.....”

To read more about Vince Sgambati’s adventures with partner Jack and daughter Mona, log on to www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org





Maggie's Money Matters



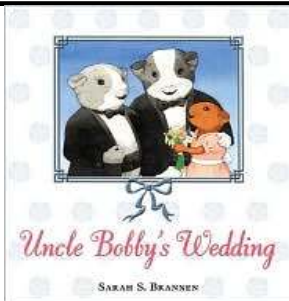
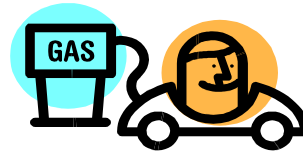
Dear Maggie,
Do you have any tips about how to save money on fuel for our vehicles? My partner and I are always running out to take or pick the kids up from a practice, a movie or a birthday party. These quick, but often trips are draining our gas tanks.
Signed,
Minivan on Empty

Dear Mini,
Boy, do I know what you mean. An American family with one car and one SUV or minivan consumes about 1,200 gallons of gas each year, according to the Federal Highway Administration. At current gas prices that means a cost of about \$3,800 a year. At any time, however, the price of a gallon of gas can vary by as much as 20 cents within a metropolitan area, says Brad Proctor, founder of GasPriceWatch, a consumer-advocacy website. To get the best bargain, avoid buying gas on weekends, when most people travel or run errands and gas stations raise prices accordingly. (Tip: Plan to take care of errands all at once instead of making extra trips.)

Also, stay away from stations on toll highways, which charge high prices to their captive customers. To find the lowest price near your home or job on a given day, go to www.gaspricewatch.com or GasBuddy (www.gasbuddy.com) and enter your home or work ZIP code. These sites bring together volunteer "price spotters" (GasPriceWatch has 110,000) who regularly update the sites with prices at local stations.

If you can stick to pumping once a week, says Proctor, you can often find the best prices on Tuesdays.

Signed,
Maggie



Good Read

by Karen Armstrong

Uncle Bobby's Wedding by Sarah Brannen

This gentle, adorable new children's picture book gives a kid's-eye view of weddings by telling its story from the perspective of young Chloe, a happy little guinea pig who's jealous when her favorite uncle announces that he's getting married. Chloe fears that Uncle Bobby's wedding will spell the end of their great friendship: no more long walks, no more boat rides together, and no more fun! But Uncle Bobby calmly reassures her that things really won't change all that that much: "I promise we'll keep having fun together," he says. "You'll always be my Chloe."

The fact that Uncle Bobby is marrying Jamie (another male guinea pig) is downplayed as just another wedding celebration in some blooming woodlands with peaceful lakes and cozy fireside scenes. The book's best image comes right at its end as happy wedding guests dance the night away in a grassy field lit by fireflies and a swollen summer moon.

By the end, Chloe feels pretty good about it all: "That was the best wedding ever," she says. "I planned it all from the beginning."

www.sarahbrannen.com



The Pride and Joy Buzz

Family Picnic in Ithaca

Over 40 people attended the Pride and Joy Family Picnic at Common Ground in Ithaca on July 13th. Rains and wind kept us from eating outside, but we had a great time inside. We listened to music and enjoying a delicious spread of picnic food. Thank you to Doug Miller of Common Ground for hosting a great time for our families. We will have our annual Fall Family Dance at Common Ground on Sunday, October 19 from 2-4 pm.

Central New York Pride Parade and Festival in Syracuse

The CNY Pride Parade and Festival, held on June 7th, drew a big crowd. Pride and Joy Families marched in the parade as a group and then headed to Everson Park to enjoy the festivities there. Join Pride and Joy Families of Syracuse for pumpkin picking on Sunday, October 5th. Check our website for details.

Pride Events in Binghamton

Folks came out to watch the rainbow flag being raised at Binghamton City Hall on June 6th. The event kicked off the recognition of LGBTQ Pride Month in the Binghamton area. Our annual Family Pride Picnic was moved to Claudia Stallman's front porch due to rain, but we all had a great time together anyway. Meet up with Pride and Joy Binghamton for Apple picking on Sunday, September 28th.

Family Week in Provincetown

In late July at Family Week in P-Town, Mass., Pride and Joy Families marched behind our banner in the Family Week Parade and enjoyed a record turnout at our annual pot luck at Jack and Vince and Mona's pad by the bay (78 adults and kids!). Thanks to our wonderful hosts!

Adoption Options



November is National Adoption Day, first celebrated (as a single week) in 1976. The observance culminates on National Adoption Day, this year November 15, when "courts and communities coast-to-coast will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt."

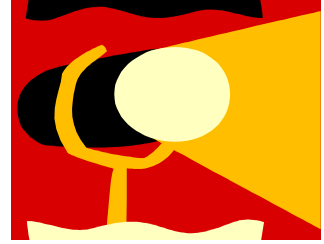
If you are in the process of adopting and on track to finalize it around November 15, visit the National Adoption Day site at: www.nationaladoptionday.org/2008 to see what you can do to have your local court participate and include your adoption among those completed that day. Be as visible as you safely can be in any related community celebrations.

If you've already adopted, hope to do so, or just want to celebrate adoptive families, you can simply join in community celebrations or organize one yourself. The National Adoption Day site has resources to help you plan your event and reach out to local businesses, faith communities, and media for support and coverage.

Let's use National Adoption Day to showcase the loving homes LGBT parents provide for children.

Our Spotlight Family.....

The Hauer-Ross Family of Binghamton



P&J: Who is in your family?

H-R Family: Patty, Heather, Harrison, Madeline, our dogs Finnegan and Caleb, and our cat, Sunny.



P&J: Describe some of your family's favorite activities.

H-R Family: We love to go to the zoo, the playground, to go to the movies, and the library.

P&J: Where did you go on your last family vacation?

H-R Family: For our last vacation we went to Philadelphia. We visited the zoo, the aquarium, and rode the Philly ducks!!

P&J: Who in your family is most likely to sleep late?

H-R Family: It's a toss up between Madeline and Finnegan!!

P&J: What was your family's favorite Pride and Joy Event?

H-R Family: Our favorite Pride and Joy event has been The Ithaca Family Dance We love to dance!!

New Outreach Consultant is a Busy Mom

We are excited to announce Heather Hauer as one of our new Pride and Joy Outreach Consultants. Heather will be planning and organizing Pride and Joy events in the Binghamton, Syracuse, Elmira and Ithaca regions of New York State.

Heather is currently a work-at-home mom to son Harrison (2 1/2) and Madeline (3mos) and is pursuing her nursing degree. As a member of Pride and Joy Families for 3 years, she is enthusiastic about helping to meet the needs of LGBT families and knows the importance of a support network for them.

Join us in welcoming Heather to our project. We can't wait to hear her great ideas!



The Hauer-Ross family.
L to R: Heather, Harrison and Patty;
Not shown: Madeline (3 months)

That's okay, I wasn't using my civil liberties anyway.

by Barbara Barry, LMSW

"You should write an article with all the updates on the marriage issue..." . My lovely girlfriend (and after 19 years and 9 months she is *still* (legally) just my girlfriend) asks me for her upcoming newsletter. I think quietly that I would rather have a root canal. At least the root canal would eventually be over and would not create pregnant pauses when I discussed my dental work in front of a room full of straight people. "I don't care what people do behind closed doors but why do they have to call it a root canal, why can't they call it a tooth reconstruction procedure..." .

So if you have been paying attention, in May, California's Supreme Court found it unconstitutional to exclude same sex couples from marriage. Now up until that point, Massachusetts had been the only state to allow same sex marriage but would not allow out of state couples to marry there due to an old miscegenation law. Isn't it fortunate when you forget to overturn your racially discriminatory laws so you can then turn around and use them on gay people? So then in July, Massachusetts overturned that law and will now allow couples from out of state to get married in Massachusetts.

There are a variety of states that are allowing some mishmash of unions or partnerships or whatever terms make straight people comfortable: Connecticut, Vermont, New Jersey, and New Hampshire allow for unions conferring all the rights and responsibilities of marriage in that state. Maine, Hawaii, DC, Oregon, and Washington have their own versions of unions. Please feel free to look them up for the details.

This is all well and good ,but remember; the federal government will not recognize *any* same sex marriage. You will still get screwed on your social security benefits, particularly if one of you makes a lot more money, if you break up, have kids, etc. Thanks to the Defense of Marriage Act passed in 1996, the federal government can ignore the marriage no matter how many states a gay couple gets married in.

After all this is happening, Governor Paterson made a formal announcement that New York agencies must recognize any out of state marriages for same sex couples. It will also recognize marriages performed in other countries. However, remember that the New York State courts were unable to state that New York had to grant all citizens marriage and sent the matter back to the lawmakers to change the law. You can see how fast that is moving. Rhode Island and New Mexico also recognize same sex marriages performed elsewhere.

This is an election year and gay marriage (and gay issues all around) are a flashpoint as they have been for the past several election cycles. Twenty six states have constitutional amendments against same sex marriage. In 2006 a constitutional Federal Marriage Amendment, which would have made it so states could not recognize same sex marriage, was introduced. This was defeated in both the senate and house.

As an aside in June, New York State passed the Family Court Access Bill which allows equal access for domestic partners (including same sex couples) to Family Court for issues of domestic violence without having to start criminal court proceedings. As a frequent guest in Family Court for my job, I am glad to see this legislation finally passed. And it actually makes sense and is pretty easy to understand.

Which is maybe my problem with all this marriage stuff. I am not just bored; I am confused, perplexed, discom-bobulated. So what you are telling me that I can go to Massachusetts, get married, and then come back to New York State and demand that New York State agencies see us as "married". But if I go to say Alabama, we are not married there because that state does not recognize it or do they have to? Is it too much to ask that my family and I be treated the same from place to place?

In July, the Census Bureau announced that it will not tabulate legally married gay and lesbian partners as married in the Census. Legislating against us is one thing; actually falsifying government statistics is another. Is nothing sacred? As you may recall, in 1990 the Census began tabulating persons cohabitating as partners and the US public got a big smackdown of gay domesticity. This was repeated in 2000 and was also a big dose of gobs and gobs of kids living with gay people. This politicalization of the Census is gross and offensive. My suggestion is that when you get the Census, if you are married, that you put a big fat check under married and that you staple a picture of the cake with the two women or gentlemen on top. But that's just me.

Pride and Joy Families Reaches Out in New Directions

Pride and Joy families is growing to serve more areas of upstate New York. In addition to Binghamton, Syracuse, Ithaca, Elmira and Rochester, Pride and Joy Families is looking to include LGBT families in Utica and Albany.



Heading up the task of reaching out to the LGBT families in the Mohawk Valley and Capital District is Jeff Sterling, one of two new Pride and Joy Families Outreach Consultants.

Jeff is a graduate of Albany College of Pharmacy, father of two grown children, one a theater-major at Oswego and the other an organic farmer,. He is proud to be an LGBT Activist and Pride Agenda Marriage Ambassador, an active member of Pride Along the Mohawk, and is dedicated to seeing equal rights bestowed on LGBT citizens statewide and nationwide. Jeff has been employed as a social worker, mental health and foster care case worker, educator (K-12 & college chemistry), and substance abuse prevention specialist and professional magician. He is enthusiastic about working with other LGBT families and wishing for an inclusive environment locally and globally.

Look for Jeff at upcoming Pride and Joy Families events in the Mohawk Valley and Capital District regions of New York State soon.



Jeff Sterling (right) and partner Milford (left)

Do you live in the Albany or Utica area?
Would you like to meet up with other LGBT families for socialization and support?

Email Jeff Sterling at jsterling@prideandjoyfamilies.org

or call 607.724.4308