



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

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Report from the Project Director

My three year old was not taking my calls. In fact, she was refusing the cards I'd left for her, one for each of the five days I'd be gone. I was in San Francisco in November for 3 days of meetings with leaders of the LGBTQ* family movement. We had two goals in mind: to map out a vision for our movement for the rights and liberation of LGBTQ families and to share "best practices" among those of us who provide programs and services to this population. Frankly, my daughter Noemi was not concerned about the lofty goals of my trip. She knew her "Ima" was not home and she was mad as hell about it. More on that later.

The National Family Summit, as we called it, was convened by the Family Equality Council (FEC, formerly, Family Pride Coalition) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Policy Institute, and funded by grants from NGLTF and the Gill Foundation. The Summit brought together researchers, scholars, legal experts, organizers, parents and activists** to get to know one another and each other's work, to agree on some central principles on the road to creating a vision for LGBTQ family equality in this country and to deliver a manual to ensure that present and future organizers never have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to providing supportive programs and services for LGBTQ families.

Some of the more interesting topics we tackled, which is not to say that we resolved them completely, included defining "family" for our purposes: Must there be children in the kinship group in order to constitute a family? Our answer was no. Can a family be just one person or does there need to be at least two people? Our answer: at least two but possibly many more. Are we talking about "LGBTQ-led" families or "LGBTQ families," i.e., any family with at least one LGBT member? We answered with the latter.

Report from the director continued...

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

124 Front Street

Binghamton, NY 13905

607.724.4308

www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

Our Staff:

Claudia Stallman, Project Director

Karen Armstrong, Health Educator

Loren Couch, Program Development Associate

Heather Hauer, Outreach Consultant

Jeffrey Sterling, Outreach Consultant

Report from the Director

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Other questions that arose included: What are the strengths and vulnerabilities of our own families and which are common to most or all LGBTQ families? Several parents expressed their worry that their children will be bullied or face discrimination in school. Other folks cited unequal access to legal protections as a vulnerability. How different or the same are LGBTQ families when compared with heterosexual families? How different do we want to be? When we pursue marriage and spousal-based social benefits are we doing a disservice to those of us in less “traditional” families (e.g., families with three or more parents/caregivers, and those with two parents that are not romantically involved)?

We focused a good deal on gender expression and how it distinguishes our families from straight families. Believe me, the conversation was endlessly fascinating, at times heated and controversial. I can't wait to see the outcome on paper (and I wish I'd taken better notes at the meeting). Jaime Grant, Director of NGLTF's Policy Institute, did a fine job of facilitating the visioning session. She and her staff will produce the final product.

During the “best practices” portion of the meeting, I learned a lot about the good works being done by my counterparts in Atlanta, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, New York City, and Toronto (and took copies of all of their newsletters and brochures so that we can flatter them by replicating their ideas here at home). Hopefully, they took away some good ideas of ours as well. We all took turns facilitating the discussion, sharing information in the areas of fundraising, parent leadership, advocacy, institutional change (e.g., provider and educator training), parent education, support groups and outreach to underserved segments of the LGBT parenting community. By the spring, we expect to have a manual to ensure that present and future LGBTQ-family organizers learn from our experiences.

As for my daughter, we had a grand reunion when I returned from California. She came running across the playground to me at preschool, jumped into my arms, squeezed my neck long and hard and gave me uncountable numbers of kisses. What can I say? The feeling was mutual.

Claudia E. Stallman

* Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer

** Representatives attended from FEC, NGLTF, COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere), National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Straight Spouses Network (supports heterosexual spouses/partners of GLBT people), National PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), Rockway Institute, A National Center for LGBT Psychology Research, Education & Public Policy, and a host of local/regional groups from around the country, including our own Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project, which of course serves upstate NY.

Our Healthy Families....



LGBT Healthy Families Initiative New Booklets Assist in Collecting Family Health History

By now, everyone in the Pride and Joy Network should have received their “Does it Run in the Family?” booklets. The LGBT Healthy Families Initiative and The Genetic Alliance have created these important booklets to assist you in collecting and recording your family’s health history. For more information or to request a set of booklets, visit www.lgbthealthinitiative.com.

LGBT families are created in many unique ways. Our identified families share history, traditions and values and common medical backgrounds. These toolkits were created to help LGBT families to understand how health, family history, health beliefs, healthy living and genetic background are an important part of future health.

Knowing your family history can help your doctor predict your risk of developing certain diseases and conditions. Family members share their genes, and often share their environment, lifestyles, and habits. Using family history helps identify if you or others in your family may be at increased risk for disease. A family health portrait given to your primary care provider helps your provider consider both your genes and these other shared risk factors influencing your health.

Please consider using one or more of the activities in the booklets to find out more about the past health of your family and increasing your chances for a healthy future. The Surgeon General suggests discussing family health history as you gather around your holiday dinner table.

We want to find out if these booklets are helpful to you. We will be contacting you again with a survey in a few months to gain feedback and information which will assist us in future projects.

Our grant from the Genetic Alliance is offering a time-limited free genetic counseling information service. This is your opportunity to review your family health history and if a question arises regarding genetics and heredity, you may complete our form online at www.lgbthealthinitiative.com and a genetic counselor will contact you. Please feel free to call us with any questions or comments; we can be reached at 607.724.4308.

Thank you for being involved in this exciting new project!

Karen Armstrong, Health Educator Karjarmstrong@aol.com

A genetic counselor from The Ferre Institute is planning to attend our Parent’s Night Out in Binghamton on January 17. She will have information about the importance of family health history and be available to answer your questions.

**EMPIRE STATE
PRIDE AGENDA**



Promises Made, Promises Kept

The New York State Elections; what happened? what does it mean for LGBT families in New York State?

Read about it at www.prideagenda.org

Declare your Family Equal!



Visit Family Equality Council and find out how the 2008 election decisions affect our families.

Download "Talking to Your Children about the 2008 Election."

at www.familyequality.org



Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network

GLSEN joins with The Advertising Council to launch the first national multimedia public service advertising (PSA) campaign designed to address the use of anti-gay language among teens. Actress Hilary Duff stars in one of the PSAs.

Preview the ads at www.glsen.org



Thursday, February 5

5-7pm

UNO Chicago Grill Vestal

Surprise guests will visit you while you enjoy your dinner!

10% of total bill will be donated to Pride and Joy Families

UNO DOUGH RAISERS™



Maggie's Money Matters



Dear Maggie,

With prices on the rise and our paychecks stretched to the max, our family is really feeling the pinch. Do you have any tips for budgeting our household expenses so we will still have some cash at the end of the month?

Signed,
Careful Spender

Dear Careful,

As food costs rise and the government starts using your tax dollars to bailout the wealthy Wall Street tycoons, where does that leave you--the typical American who didn't get a cost of living raise to go along with higher household costs? Here are some tips for surviving the recession without feeling the crunch.

1. Put the public library on your weekly outing list. It's easier to grab that magazine as you wait in the grocery line, but you'll add up the savings by checking out books and videos free.
2. Organize a kid-watching cartel instead of hiring baby-sitters. Other parents are feeling the same financial crunch but by watching their kids once a week, you get a free night out without paying the sitter.

3. Switch to generic brands. Do you have ANY idea how much this saves on your grocery bill? Granted, there are some generic lemons, but many of the big brand names just repackaged the same product under a generic label in order to corner both markets.

4. Let the gym membership slide until the economy picks up. There's nothing you do there that you can't do at home or jogging on the street. And the air is fresher outside, anyway.

5. Go wireless. If you have a land line and a cell phone - you have too many phones. Increase the monthly minutes on your wireless plan and cancel your land line. You'll save a bundle.

Also, you can check out these resources:

The Family Budget Workbook
by Larry Burkett
How to Create a Family Budget—and stick to it!
by Cara Mirabella

SPOTLIGHT FAMILY

The Lutman-Spring Family

P&J: Who is in your family?

L-S: We are the Lutman-Spring family, as pictured here: Suzanne (Momma), Auden Margaret, and Jenn (Mommy).



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

L-S: Our favorite activities include being outdoors -- especially going on walks, gardening, and watching sports events -- and visiting with family and friends whenever we get a break from our jobs as teachers. We also love to listen to music and read and write together as a family.

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

L-S: Sleep late?! With a 5-month old baby? Wouldn't that be nice! We wish Auden Margaret were the one most likely to hit snooze. Maybe in the future...

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

L-S: We moved to Hamilton, NY from Ann Arbor, MI relatively recently.

Now that the baby's here and things are settling, we look forward to becoming more involved in Pride & Joy and getting to know everyone.

Good News from Central New York

We're very happy to announce the creation of three new programs in the Central New York region, thanks to the governor's funding for LGBT Health and Human Services (the same funding source that the Lesbian and Gay Family Building Project draws from):

Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes (PPSFL) announces the launch of its new project to improve the health and wellness of LGBT people, families and communities in their service area, which includes Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Tompkins Counties. Their first program was a workshop held in Ithaca on Thursday, December 4, "Removing the Barriers: Providing Culturally Competent Care to LGBT People." Family Building Project Director, Claudia Stallman, attended. While Maureen Kelly and the other good folks at PPSFL have been providing LGBT-sensitive care for many years, they finally have the resources to do it even bigger and better! For more information about their new project or to be added to their mailing list, contact Beth Brunelle, LGBT Outreach Coordinator, at beth.brunelle@ppsfl.org or 607.216.0021, ext. 135.

The Cortland LGBT Resource Center opened its doors on September 1st. The Center is located at 29 Central Avenue and offers educational training programs to community groups, schools and local employers; advocates and provides support services for youths and families, including support groups; makes referrals to safe and welcoming service providers; and plans LGBT community events. Congratulations to Alison Beach, the founding Project Coordinator (she and her wife and daughter are recent members of our Pride and Joy Families network), and to her diligent Board of Directors, which wrote the grant application and wisely hired Ali to run the new Center. We look forward to supporting their good work in Cortland. For info, email coordinator@cortlandlgbt.org or call 607.756.8970.

Binghamton, NY, is now home to Identity Youth Center, a safe and confidential space for youth ages 14 to 20. Identity is located downtown at 206 State Street. They will host an Open House on Monday, December 15th, 4-6 pm. Identity is dedicated to promoting education and support for LGBTQ youth, their families and the community. Identity welcomes and empowers all LGBTQ youth and their allies to come and be who they are. Identity was funded and created thanks to the foresight of the Broome LGBTQ Youth Coalition, established in February of 2005, and the leadership of John Barry, Executive Director of Southern Tier AIDS Program. Thanks to John and his staff, youth in Broome County finally have a safe place to go and find support! For more information about Identity, please contact Erin Gotthardt, Identity Coordinator, at egotthardt@stapinc.org, or call 607.651.9175. Our Project looks forward to supporting the work of the new youth center and is proud to have played a part in its creation.

Become OUTSpoken!

The National Speaker's Bureau for Family Equality Comes to Upstate New York

Attendees at the 2009 Pride and Joy Families Weekend Conference, April 24-26, will have the opportunity to receive 3 hours of training and become part of Family Equality Council's (FEC) national speakers bureau. FEC is a co-presenter of our Conference and will have staff on site to provide training for those who sign up in advance (we need at least 10 people to make a go of it). Each participant will receive instruction and practice in countering the vitriolic misinformation of the fundamentalist right with credible social science research, reliable facts and our own stories. The training will equip you to tell your story in the media or at the holiday dinner table. Over 1000 people in 39 states, the District of Columbia, one US territory and three countries have already signed on to be OUTSpoken. Please contact Loren Couch, lcouch@prideandjoyfamilies.org, 607.724.4308, and let him know that you'd like to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

2009 CONFERENCE

Pride and Joy Families Weekend

Visit: www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org

April 24th - 26th, 2009, Utica, NY

Pride and Joy Families Conference-A Great Weekend Planned

We've been busy planning some very exciting workshops and activities for this unique conference. Not only will participants enjoy a weekend together with other LGBT families, they will also listen to fantastic speakers and enjoy music and educational programs that were chosen especially for them.

As families arrive on Friday, they will enjoy a dinner buffet and then get together around the indoor pool (kids bring your bathing suits!) or gather in the bar area near the pool.

Saturday morning is the start of a full day for parents, prospective parents and children. There will be fully licensed childcare and creative children's programming for kids six months to second grade and COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) staff is coming to New York especially to facilitate fun and educational sessions for children in grades 3 to 12.

Kids will never be bored as they enjoy the long list of activities planned for them. These include music, crafts, interactive games and lessons about families like theirs. Parents will be busy too, as they attend many of the workshops and activities that have been designed to hold their particular interest.

Our keynote speaker, Jennifer Chrisler of Family Equity Council, knows a lot about LGBT families. She will share how she works passionately for these families and why she is known as a leading advocate for LGBT families nationwide.



We are lucky to have another great speaker, Dr. Charlotte Patterson. As a developmental psychologist, Patterson has pursued research on children's personal and social development in the context of family, peer, and school environments; in recent years, much of her work has focused on child development in lesbian- and gay-parented families.

We will wrap up on Sunday with fun family events, so that parents and kids can interact and learn together in a welcoming environment surrounded by families like theirs. Family friendly choices include music, dancing and art activities as well as opportunities to explore the local area with other families.

Please register your interest at www.prideandjoyfamilies.org. We look forward to having you join us for this exciting weekend.

If you know of any organizations or individuals who would be interested in advertising or underwriting this exciting weekend event, please contact me at lcouch@prideandjoyfamilies.org.

Loren Couch, Conference Coordinator

Syracuse Hate Crime

By Vince Sgambati*

In November's *Vince's View*, I wrote that despite Obama's win, "...this was no time for queers to hang up our boas." I was referring to the four anti-gay ballot initiatives that passed, and unwittingly to a murder that would take place in Syracuse ten days after the election. On Friday, November 14, at 8:45 p.m., 22-year-old Latiesha Green suffered a fatal gunshot wound to the chest. Tiesh self-identified as transgender, and her family and the police believe that her murder was a hate crime. A Syracuse man is being held without bail for Tiesh's murder.

Monday night, three days after her death, at least 75 people gathered outside of Tiesh's family's house. Within the glow of candlelight and surrounded by teddy bears, flowers and photographs of Tiesh, Mothers Against Gun Violence lamented this and too many other tragedies. One mother said that she had attended five vigils in four weeks, "We can not keep killing our babies." I clutched my own twelve-year-old baby's hand and the arm of a friend standing to my left. We all bowed our heads in prayer.

Tiesh was described as loving, caring and compassionate.

In one hateful moment of bigotry, her life was taken. But what can never be taken away or erased is how fully Tiesh's family accepted and loved her. Through tears, hundreds of LGBT folks in Syracuse have read about and watched news clips where Tiesh's family spoke of her with pride and of her senseless murder as a hate crime. I'm reminded of the recent polls, the pundits and the few proposition 8 demonstrators that scapegoated African Americans as if they possess some uniquely entrenched group homophobia. Tiesh's family had the tragic opportunity to prove otherwise.



Latiesha Green, 22

Since Tiesh's murder, emails have been flying on the Syracuse Pride and Joy listserve, and numerous local LGBT organizations (including P&J) have been partnering with other local organizations like Vera House, Mothers Against Gun Violence, FACES at the South West Community Center, Legal Services of CNY AIDS Law Project, and with the National Center for Transgender Equality and New York City Anti-Violence Project. Adrea Jaehnig of the Syracuse University LGBT Resource Center has spearheaded much of this collaboration. Ultimately, we can't bring Tiesh back to her family, but we can give the family support, be proactive about this moving forward as a hate crime, educate the media and the larger Syracuse community and, like the Mothers Against Gun Violence, bear witness in memory to Tiesh.

*Please visit our website www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org to read Vince's bimonthly column about life in Central New York with his partner, Jack and daughter, Mona.

"70 Under 30" Youth Hate Crimes Report

GenderPAC's updated hate crimes report highlights the continuing social vulnerability that assault victims face if they are young, of color and gender non-conforming. It also underscores the limited resources for safety and support many of them have. "While many youth who don't fit stereotypes for masculinity and femininity face harassment of bullying, when it comes to gender-based murder, the victims are specific and consistent," according to Riki Wilchins, Executive Director of GenderPAC.

To download the complete report, visit www.70under30.org

**Pride and Joy Families
Winter 2008-2009
Calendar of LGBT Family Events**

Albany: LGBT Families Holiday Party, Saturday, December 13, 2008, 3-6:00 pm. Lambda Family Circle, Albany's LGBT family group, will hold their holiday party at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany. Our own Jeff Sterling, Pride and Joy Outreach Consultant, will do a magic show for the kids beginning at 4 pm. To RSVP for this event and to learn more about Lambda Family Circle, send an email message to the listserv moderator at lambda_familycircle@yahoo.com.

Binghamton: Celebrate the Holidays with Pride and Joy Families, Sunday, December 14, 2008, 2 pm. Please join us for a tour of Hanukkah House Museum at Temple Concord (admission-non perishable food for CHOW) and a visit to Home for the Holidays at Roberson Museum (admission \$7 adults, \$5 students/seniors, free for kids under 4). Temple Concord is located at 9 Riverside Drive, Binghamton. Roberson now has a café if people want to get a bite to eat afterwards. Please RSVP to the list-serve, Heather Hauer (hauer@prideandjoyfamilies.org) or by calling 607.724.4308.

Syracuse: Q Family Story Hour, Lavender Inkwell Bookshoppe, Saturdays, December 20, January 17, February 21, at 11 am. Q Family Story Hour is a tradition at this gay-owned bookstore in Syracuse. It takes place regularly on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 11am. For more information, contact Scott Henni, Lavender Inkwell Bookshoppe, 315.424.7191

Binghamton: Beginning in January! Join with your child in a reading community at **RiverRead Books**, Binghamton's new independent bookstore. Morning Storytime (stories and related activity for 3-5 year old children) on second Saturday, beginning January 10, 11 am. Story Hour (multicultural stories and activity for 4-6 year old children) on fourth Saturday afternoon, beginning January 24, 2 pm. Children and their parents/ caregivers can expect to hear books that feature diverse families. Registration encouraged 607.217.7292. RiverRead Books, 5 Court Street, Binghamton. Easy parking on Wall Street or in the city ramp by Boscov's on Water Street.

Binghamton: Pride and Joy Parent's Night Out, Friday, January 16, 2009, 7:30 pm. Please join us at the home of Betsy and Lorraine, for an adults-only (parents and aspiring parents are welcome!) evening of socializing and grown-up conversation.

Syracuse and Finger Lakes: Pride and Joy Families Splash Party, Saturday, January 24, 1-3:00 pm. Join Pride and Joy families from Syracuse and the Finger Lakes region for swimming and fun at the Skaneateles Community Center, 97 State Street, Skaneateles (State Street is also State Route 321). Discounted admission \$5.50, \$3.50 kids (4-18). Food is available for purchase. If we need to cancel due to poor weather, there will be a message at 607.724.4308, option 3, by 11 am that day. Please RSVP to the list-serve, Heather Hauer (hauer@prideandjoyfamilies.org) or by calling 607.724.4308, option 3.

Binghamton: Fundraiser for Pride and Joy Families, Vestal, Thursday, February 5, 2009, 5-7 pm. Our second "Dough Raiser" will be held at UNO Chicago Grill in the Town Square Mall. 10% of our total bill will be donated to Pride and Joy Families. Celebrity Chef(s) TBA.

Binghamton: Community Service Opportunity, Soup Kitchen, Tuesday, February 10, 2009, 5-7 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 42 Chenango Street, Binghamton. Second Tuesday of each month. Email Hauer@PrideAndJoyFamilies.org for details if interested.

Syracuse: Pride and Joy Families Ice Skating in February. Meet at Clinton Square Park for an afternoon of skating. Date TBA. Check listserv for details. Please RSVP to your Pride and Joy listserv or to Heather at Hauer@PrideAndJoyFamilies.org or 607.724.4308, option 3.