

National Conference Challenges Members To Be the Change ~ by Courtney Schrieve



Luke Miller, Courtney Schrieve, Tom Bush, Allen Brown at the 2017 PFLAG National Convention in Portland, OR

Since joining PFLAG over 7 years ago, I have always dreamed of going to a National Conference. This year I got my chance in Portland, along with fellow PFLAG-Olympia family members, Tom, Allen and Luke! We met fascinating people from all over the country, heard inspiring stories, ate Voodoo donuts, walked in the rain, went to a show with the world's oldest drag queen and the guys took their first Uber.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

When I joined PFLAG-Olympia, same-sex marriage was still not recognized in Washington state, legislative bathroom battles had not begun, and Caitlyn Jenner was still known to America as Bruce. It was during this time when my teenage son had just come out as transgender. I truly did not know where to turn, but somehow found PFLAG-Olympia. I met so many wonderful people I now consider my second family, but only a couple of us had transgender children and resources were limited. My how things have changed!

The theme of this year's PFLAG national conference was "**We are the change**" – and people we have work to do! PFLAG President Jean Hodges challenged us and nearly 400 other chapters to "oppose federal and state legislation granting a so-called license to discriminate," and to "protest discriminatory policies harming transgender people and their freedom to be themselves." Newly anointed Executive Director Jaime M. Grant, Ph. D. reminded us that we all "have a role to play in raising the voices of reason in the face of dehumanizing lies."

In addition to *change*, **diversity** seemed to be a prevalent theme in Portland – despite the recognized lack of racial diversity amongst the PFLAG staff and attendees. Several speakers were Latinx – a gender neutral term often used in lieu of Latino or Latina (referencing Latin American cultural or racial identity). I attended three sessions around this issue. One was by Lisbeth Melendez Rivera of the Human Rights Campaign and coordinator of the **A la Familia** project, training and empowering Latino/as throughout the country around LGBTQ issues; another was a film called **Raising Zoey**, a moving documentary about a 13-year-old transgender girl and her supportive Latina working single mom, Ofelia; there was also a workshop on **Intersectionality** by the Golden Triangle Transgender Support group from Texas, and a Diversity and Inclusion Roundtable. Rich discussion, tough questions and empowered and brave presenters!

Ask anyone who has been to a national conference before, it can all be a bit overwhelming. White privilege was in my face a lot, and I realized that having raised my son does not mean I can stop being an advocate for others. Intergenerational splits also need to be mended. Tom went to several religious-

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PFLAG-Olympia meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of each month, 2-4:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia. The first hour includes a welcome, introductions, and our program, followed by snacks and support circles.

What is happening at upcoming meetings?

December 10 — Annual Holiday Party. We'll have a white elephant gift exchange and lots of snacks and good cheer. Bring a cheap wrapped gift. Re-gifting OK and even encouraged.

January 14 — LGBTQ Resource Fair. Representatives from local LGBTQ organizations will be on hand for informational tabling.

Other Great Stuff Happening:

SAGE Olympia Koffee Klatch - good company shared with coffee, every 2nd Monday at the Bread Peddler, 222 Capitol Blvd., Olympia, Dec. 11 at 10 a.m. and at Dancing Goats Coffee, 4219 6th Ave., Lacey, across from the Lacey Transit Center, Dec. 28, 3:30 - 5 p.m.

The **Parent/Trans Child Support Group**, a support groups for parents, guardians, caregivers, and trans/nonbinary children. meets Sunday, Dec. 17 from 2-4 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1925 Boulevard Rd. SE, Olympia.



Check out our website at <http://pflag-olympia.org/>

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based presentations, Luke and I crossed path at a bi-sexual workshop, and fellow PFLAG-Olympia member **Erika Laurentz** took part in a "Creating Trans-Respectful Spaces in Law Enforcement" panel. We all soaked it up and look forward to sharing ideas and resources with the Board and our members.

The most inspiring moment for me – and there were many – was when **PFLAG Orlando** was honored for their work after the Pulse Nightclub terrorist attack. One member went to the scene to help translate police communication to families; they got mental health support at meetings and updated their mobile app from the city. They also gave many of the donations their received to coalition partners for Latino and LGBTQ families.

So what will it be for PFLAG-Olympia...are we ready to make a change? Will we do more outreach to diverse populations? Help jumpstart a rural PFLAG chapter? Collaborate on the LGBTQ center? Whatever we decide, it's going to take all of us.

Ready...set...GO! #wearethechange

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

- Support** to cope with an adverse society,
- Education** to enlighten an ill-informed public, and
- Advocacy** to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

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

HeartBeat is a free publication of the PFLAG chapter in Olympia, Washington, published quarterly. The editors are Alec & Gabi Clayton.

Have you paid dues or donated to PFLAG-Olympia lately? Contact our treasurer, Larry Kronquist at treasurer@pflag-olympia.org and he can check dues status. Donations are welcome!

Join or donate:
<http://www.pflag-olympia.org/membership.html>



Subscribe to the PFLAG-Olympia Alert List!

The PFLAG-Olympia Alert is a one-way announcement email list designed to inform our members and friends of upcoming events.

To subscribe, send your request to be added to newsletter@pflag-olympia.org or subscribe online with the form at <http://pflag-olympia.org/newsletter.html>

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PFLAG Olympia, P O Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732
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PFLAG
Olympia, Washington

MEETS at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia. It is handicap-accessible. In August we meet at 1pm for a potluck picnic in a local park.

DIRECTIONS: From Sylvester Park on Capitol Way and Legion Way, go 12 blocks east on Legion Way to Boundary Street. Turn left around the church. Park in the lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary and enter through the glass doors.

Mailing address:
PO Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

For more information:
email: info@pflag-olympia.org

Or go to our website:
<http://pflag-olympia.org>