

Winter 2009



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

*PFLAG Safe Schools
Cultivating Respect Certification
January 30, 2010 • 9:30 am – 5:00 pm
First MCC
1379 Tullie Rd, Atlanta*

The goal of the PFLAG Safe Schools Cultivating Respect program is to train and certify our members to go directly into schools with community resources, training for the entire staff, model policy and creative programs that address bullying in a comprehensive and effective manner. Safe Schools Chairman, Jeannie Senter, has arranged for PFLAG National to offer this certification in coordination with PFLAG Atlanta on January 30, 2010 at First MCC, 1379 Tullie Rd, Atlanta. They are expecting attendance from as far away as Florida, Alabama, Tennessee and North Carolina. According to Jeannie, "After the training you should feel confident and eager to develop a safe schools program in your community."

PFLAG launched the Safe Schools program - Our House to the School House- in 2000. The new version, Safe Schools Cultivating Respect, continues the tradition of pairing PFLAG community activists and leaders with proven strategies to improve school environments.

The training consists of:

- learning to tell our story in an effective and appropriate way depending on the audience;
- using statistics and current events to build a stronger case;
- skill building on language, policy and problem solving in a school environment;
- understanding the different access points in a school that you can leverage;

- training on 3 specific programs that can implement in their school community.

At the end of the one-day training participants will receive a binder with all the training materials, modules detailing how to implement the programs that were presented, and a copy of the new safe schools booklet. After the training, participants will be added to a PFLAG Google list serve that will be used to update information, brainstorm ideas, problem solve and build resources among the participants.

For those in the area Friday night, we will have a 'meet and greet' dinner with our PFLAG National Trainer, Jamie Curtis. Details regarding time and restaurant location will follow for those interested.

Registration and continental breakfast will be from 9:30 – 9:55am. The program will be held from 10am – 5pm with a lunch break. The cost is \$22.00 (\$20 each for two or more registering from the same chapter) until Jan.15, \$30.00 thereafter. Lunch and continental breakfast are included. Contact Jeannie Senter (paragonjeannie@yahoo.com) for additional information.

Please mail registration checks to:

PFLAG Atlanta
1379 Tullie Road Atlanta,
GA 30329
Attn – Jeannie Senter



**PFLAG meetings are held regularly in Atlanta.
Call (770) 662-6475 for more information.**

News

of Interest to PFLAG Members

STRAIGHT FOR EQUALITY AT FRITO-LAY

On August 20, Grace Ann Young and Rick Marson made a Straight for Equality presentation to interested staff at Frito-Lay. In a thank you note, DJ Chapman, Zone Business Manager, wrote "I wanted to thank you for coming to talk to our group yesterday. Hopefully your words opened up some hearts and minds... It was great to hear the stories that you and Rick had. Truly inspirational."

GEORGIA STATE ALLY PANEL

Representing PFLAG Atlanta, Dale and Mary Lynn Merkle participated in the 1st Annual Ally Panel presented by the Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity at Georgia State University on October 15. With representatives from throughout the community, the panel spoke to the audience about the role and importance of allies in the GLBTQIQ community.

OGLETHORPE SEXUALITY CLASS

Speakers' Bureau members Cliff Richards, and Ernest and Karen Turner spoke to a class on Human Sexuality at Oglethorpe University October 26th. Each member talked about their own experiences. The Turners spoke from the viewpoint of parents and Cliff Richards gave the class a compelling view of being a gay teen in the eighties and his experiences since then. The presentation was then opened to questions.

PRIDE WEEKEND

What a difference four months make! The Pride Parade was bigger and better than ever and it was held on a gorgeous crisp autumn day with blue skies and bright sunshine. It was so great to be back walking down Peachtree St. towards Piedmont Park rather than away from it as we did last year. The park was glorious as well with more diverse crowds and everyone enjoying the sunshine. Our thanks go to Leo and Fran Brandino for organizing our parade efforts and to Diana Burdette and those who helped her staff our Pride Booth Saturday and Sunday.

We had a successful raffle this year at our Pride booth for the Scholarship fund and we would like to thank the generosity of Macy's for two gift cards and Todd DeVore for a massage package as prizes.



BOOKCASE RETURNS

Our bookcase is back and more beautiful than ever. Because it took a direct hit from the rain damage experienced in July at First MCC, it needed to be entirely refinished. Mary Lynn and Dale Merkle have been the careful conservators of our large book collection which wasn't damaged in the storm. We are grateful for their many efforts in moving and keeping the books and the Merkses are every bit as pleased to get their garage space back! Thank you Merkses.

Events Calendar

Dec 20 – Program and Support
Anneliese Singh and Maru Gonzales
Georgia Safe Schools Coalition

Jan 4 – 1st Monday Support
Support only

Jan 17 – Program and Support
Cliff Richards

Growing Up Gay in the 80's

Feb 1 – 1st Monday Support
Support only

Feb 21 – Program and Support
Shawn Werner

The Victory Fund in Georgia

Mar 1 – 1st Monday Support
Support only

Regular Scheduled Meetings

Our main meeting is the 3rd Sunday of every month with support & a program.

2:45 – 5:00pm
First MCC Social Hall
1379 Tullie Rd., Atlanta

We meet the 1st Monday of every month for additional support
7:00-8:30 p.m. UUCA in the Chapel

Directions available at:
www.pflagatl.org/meetings.htm

Secret Garden Fundraiser A Success:

**Thank You Donors
and Sponsors!!!**



Despite the rainy afternoon, our Secret Garden Fundraiser on September 26, was a great success! We are so appreciative of the hospitality offered to us by Henry Everett and Jesse Uselton who provided their beautiful gardens and home for our party. With intermittent dry periods, guests were able to go out into the gardens to view the lovely roses, dahlias, begonias and a wide variety of other plantings. In the meantime, good conversation along with the enjoyment of fine food and refreshments made it a lovely afternoon. And that was before the prizes were given out!

To those who attended, thank you for coming and supporting PFLAG with your donations! Thank you also to those of you who contributed, but could not attend the event. Your generous contributions mean so much to us. We hope all of you will be able to attend our 2nd Annual Secret Garden Party next year!

We would also like to thank those who worked to establish the fundraiser as an annual event: Brooke Smith for the perfect email invitation design, Sam and Bonnie Roth for the fabulous food, Rick Marson as MC and for providing the tables and music, Karen Turner for securing the fundraising items and invitations, Grace Ann Young for overseeing the member/donor invitations, Mary Lynn and Dale Merkle for finding the Secret Garden and Diana Burdette for managing the raffle and auction all afternoon.

Of those who came, many left with wonderful prizes and we have many new members and donors. We are indebted to Atlanta community organizations and individuals for their gracious support of PFLAG Atlanta by donating so many fine prizes. All new donors, sponsors and members are included in our newsletter mailings for the coming year.

We would like to thank the following sponsors for their first class generosity.

- Actors Express – 2 tickets
- Alliance Theatre – 2 tickets
- Ansley Park Playhouse – 2 tickets
- Atlanta Ballet – 2 tickets
- Atlanta Botanical Garden – 4 tickets
- Atlanta Opera – 2 tickets
- Atlanta Symphony – 2 tickets
- Barbara Katz – lawyer – Last Will and Testament package
- Costco Alpharetta – gift card
- Edie Egwuonwu – consultant – 20 hrs
- Ferst Center for the Arts – 2 tickets
- Frito-Lay – large basket of company items
- Georgia Shakespeare – 2 tickets
- High Museum of Art – 1 family membership & 2 sets of 4 admission tickets
- Hosts Henry Everett and Jesse Uselton – 3 gorgeous garden bouquets
- Live Nation Chastain- concert table for 6
- Sam and Bonnie Roth – Garden themed table decorations
- Shakespeare Tavern – 2 box seats
- Wagalot - dog kennel – dog weekend

If you didn't get a chance to send in a donation, our fiscal year doesn't end until December 31st. Please use the envelope enclosed in the newsletter for a membership or donation. You can also donate online at www.pflagatl.com/donate. Remember, we are a tax deductible 501-c3 charity.

Donations can now be made through United Way as well.

SCHOLARSHIPS POSTPONED TO 2011

With much regret, PFLAG Atlanta's board voted to postpone scholarship awards until 2011 due to a lack of sufficient funding for 2010. We will continue to try to raise funds over the coming year and will look for additional methods to do so. If you know of a group which would like to sponsor a named

scholarship or contribute to our general scholarship program, please let us know. Individual contributions can always be made using the enclosed envelope or online at www.pflagatl.org/donate.



New Officers Elected

At our October Membership meeting, the following officers were elected for a two year term: Co-Presidents Karen Turner and Mary Lynn Merkle, Treasurer Diana Burdette, and Secretary Linda Marson. Other board members include Jeannie Senter (Safe Schools Chair), Rick Marson (Speakers' Bureau Chair), Billie Pendelton-Parker (Scholarship Chair) and Fran Brandino (Welcoming and Membership Chair).

Dale Merkle, Grace Ann Young, and Jeff and Julie MacKenzie have stepped down from the board. We very much appreciate all the effort and hard work these volunteers have put into our chapter and we look forward to their continued participation as regular members.

Fran Brandino: Welcoming and Membership Chairman

Fran Brandino is the newest member of our PFLAG board. She and her husband, Leo, moved their family from Long Island to the Atlanta area in 2003. Several years later Fran and Leo learned that their daughter is gay. They found the PFLAG Atlanta chapter after a search on the internet and began attending meetings on a regular basis. They both found much needed support from the other members at the meetings and over time, decided that they wanted to start giving back to others.

In 2008 they both marched in the Atlanta Pride Parade and this year, Leo and Fran headed up the Pride Parade Committee. They have already offered to repeat as chairs of the Pride Parade in 2010!

Fran has also volunteered to chair PFLAG Atlanta's Welcoming and Membership Committee. We are thrilled to have Fran taking on this important role and welcome her to the board.



A Teachable Moment

By Dale Merkle

I didn't know her name until last week. I like to follow sports, but I had missed the news that in August, Caster Semenya, a teenage runner from South Africa, had become the women's 800-meter world champion.

I know her name now, because an Australian newspaper leaked the results of complex genetic and physical tests that allege that Ms. Semenya does not have ovaries or a uterus, but internal testes and AIS, androgen insensitivity syndrome*. The International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) says it is considering the results and will decide if she can compete as a woman in the future. Media reports have used the now-discredited term "hermaphrodite" to describe her.

I believe this could be a teachable moment in our PFLAG Chapter and in our homes. As many as one in 1,500 babies is born with external genitals not easily identifiable as male or female, and many more people find out at puberty or later that they do not have organs, chromosomes or hormones that neatly fit into male or female definitions of biological sex.

There is nothing new about biological sexual difference, nor about our call to understand sexual and gender diversity as a blessed part of our lives.

*Note: Androgen insensitivity causes an interruption of fetal development of the reproductive system. In AIS the child is conceived with male (XY) sex chromosomes. Embryonic testes develop inside the body and produce androgens, but these male hormones cannot cause male genital development due to a rare insensitivity of the fetal body tissues to androgens. The external genital development continues along female lines, however, development of female internal organs is suppressed by a hormone (MIF, mullerian inhibiting factor) from the fetal testes. Tissue androgen sensitivity is controlled by a gene on the X chromosome, and AIS is an "X-linked recessive" condition, either inherited along the maternal line or, in an estimated third of cases, resulting from a spontaneous mutation.



Membership Renewals



A red star on your newsletter address label means it is time to renew.