



Greater Boston PFLAG

NEWS & VIEWS

September 2008 — November 2008
85 River Street, Suite 5A, Waltham MA 02453

Greater Boston PFLAG is committed to creating environments of understanding and respect for 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. We provide opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and act to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

President's Message

By Stan Griffith

Contact info: 781-861-7689 or
stangriffith@rcn.com

Greater Boston PFLAG's new year begins October 1, 2008, and as I am writing this, we are just about to hold our September Annual Meeting of Members.

First, I want to thank departing Board members **Sarah Garner**, who has served us so well as our Treasurer, and **Jeff Dubinski**, our Board Vice President. Both Sarah and Jeff will remain involved, as their time and other commitments permit, Sarah transitioning her duties to our incoming Treasurer, Chris Johnson, and Jeff working on our annual Pride and Passion Fundraiser. We appreciate all the time and energy that they have contributed.

At the September Annual Meeting we will be bringing on a diverse group of talented and energetic new Board members for an initial two-year term: **Chris Johnson, Tobias Bennett, John Dacey, Linda Patterson, Amy E. G. Stickles, and Sue Wilson**, and **Beth Shaw** (who will continue as Board Clerk), **Debby Rempis**, and **Timothy Woodward** will be continuing with me as returning Board members. **Meg Costello, Jeff Cowen, Lucretia Godfrey, Beth-Anne Halpert, Linda Peterson** and **Ed Walker**, having been elected at the 2007 meeting, continue to serve out their two-year term. I would urge that you take a look at the biographies of our Board, which begins on page 3.

Inez Folsom, who has been active with Greater Boston PFLAG since 1996 in numerous capacities, will be joining Tim Woodward on the Nominating Committee. The chair of our Nominating Committee, **Past President, Gretchen Frasier**, and her husband **Cline**, will be relocating to the West Coast. She will,

Greater Boston PFLAG

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therefore, be stepping down as chair of the Nominating Committee. There will be more to say about this before they depart, but Gretchen and Cline leave behind a whole closet of big shoes for us to fill, and we will miss their dedication, insights, wisdom, and warm smiles. We wish them well as they make this transition, and look forward to sending them off in fine style at a future gathering in their honor.

A Review of 2007-2008: We are a volunteer-based organization with a small, but amazing staff. Largely due to shifts in the economy, we fell short on our goal of significantly increasing our staffing and our financial resources so that we could better address the needs of our community. Nevertheless, we are very pleased that we continued to provide high quality training for students and faculty throughout the Commonwealth to promote welcoming and safe environments for GLBT students. We continued our supportive work with families throughout the Boston area by offering to provide one-on-one support to help-line callers. We organized a specialized support group to work with the parents of transgender children. We also piloted new ways of reaching out to parents of youth who are involved in school gay-straight alliances.

Greater Boston PFLAG expanded services to new communities, including communities of color, and

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President's Message (Continued from page 1)

launched a number of new chapters. Thanks to **Ann Schlessinger, Joanne Greenfield, and Gretchen Frasier**, we completed a very successful training program for local chapter leaders. We hope to build on the progress of 2007-2008 during the next year, increasing our chapter support groups and expanding services in urban communities.

Last year, we created an innovative outreach program to improve our referral networks. Greater Boston PFLAG established partnerships with religious denominations and counseling associations to ensure that clergy and professional members know about PFLAG and are equipped to make referrals. We reached out to these counseling professionals by presenting at their conferences and through their newsletters, targeted electronic mail notices, mass mailings and specially designed brochures. In 2008-2009, we will add more denominations and professional organizations to the referral networks program, and hope to develop a poster program designed to increase awareness of Greater Boston PFLAG's support services.

The Sixth Annual Pride and Passion Fundraising Party in April at the Hyatt Hotel in Boston was a huge success. We honored the **Greater Boston Business Council** for their leadership in providing successful role models for youth and for their work on behalf of our community. Youth and parent speakers gave inspired testimony to the crucial work being done by Greater Boston PFLAG. We awarded six **Elsie Frank**



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Scholarships in recognition of the courageous work being done by youth leaders in support of equality. We wish to thank all the volunteers and supporters who contributed to making the evening so memorable, especially, our event co-chairs, **Jeff Dubinski and Linda Peterson**, and their amazing committee, our Honorary Co-Chairs, **Robert and Joan Parker and Chad and Anne Gifford**, and our honored guests and speakers, the **Hon. Barney Frank, and his sister, former Board member Doris Breay, Mayor Thomas Menino, and MC for the night David Brown**. Finally, we want to thank our generous corporate and individual sponsors, who are listed on page 5 of this newsletter. We are already laying plans for next year's fundraiser, and are recruiting volunteers.

The Year Ahead (2008-2009): The Board is still finalizing the 2008-2009 Strategic Plan, but based on our draft plan, we anticipate that we will carry forward the 2007-2008 initiatives to grow and expand support services to parents, to increase the number of chapters, particularly in underserved communities, and expand the referral network that was created during last year. In addition, there will be at least three major areas of focus in 2008-2009:

- We are developing a pilot program that provides workplace-based education and support services to families with gay children or other relatives. Building on over 23 years of experience providing community-based services, we want to make this expertise available through company employee assistance programs. We expect to line up four to six major employers to participate in the pilot and find seed-money for the program.
- In May 2008, the Department of Public Health released the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, which showed that all risks (including risk of violence and suicide) for gay youth either remained the same or got worse in comparison to 2005. We know from soon to be published, groundbreaking research that there is a

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CANDIDATES FOR DIRECTORS TO THE BOARD, TERMS END SEPTEMBER, 2010:

Stanley N. Griffith, President (Lexington, standing for 3rd term), and his wife, Ann Schaffler have a blended family, each with an adult son and daughter. His daughter is gay. They benefited from school and community-based support programs designed to combat homophobia, and to improve understanding of the rights and needs of gay and lesbian people. He wants to repay that debt and to ensure that programs like the one in Lexington survive and expand. Most of his life, he has been involved in peace, civil liberties, and social justice issues. After 29 years as a corporate lawyer, he retired early in order to return to a career in public interest law and advocacy. He is active in local civic and political affairs, and in the Follen Community Church.

Beth Shaw, Clerk (Westford, standing for 3rd term), and husband Bob have lived 34 years in Westford, where they raised their three daughters. Their oldest, fell in love with a woman at age 32. They married in 2004 and their union was blessed in a church service in June 2005. Beth has been a long-time member and past-president of the League of Women Voters. For twenty-two years the Westford School Committee appointed her to the Citizens Advisory Committee for Health Education, which advised on issues of health and human sexuality for the K-12 curriculum. She is a retired associate professor of nursing from Fitchburg State College.

Chris Johnson, Treasurer (West Roxbury, standing for 1st term), worked for five years as Greater Boston PFLAG's Accounting Manager. He left to work with the Clinton Foundation where he serves on the management team as Assistant Controller. He has maintained a consistent interest in supporting Human Services, and served on the management team of a mental health services non-profit in a programmatic capacity. He values his relationship with Greater Boston PFLAG, and wants to contribute towards its ongoing success in the value that it adds to the community. He feels that working with a larger organization has given him the perspective to provide oversight on current fiscal practices to ensure that conservative measures are taken to preserve current activities, as well as to provide broad fiscal thinking on new activities.

Tobias Bennett (Billerica, standing for 1st term), a recent high-school graduate, will enter U. Mass, Amherst this upcoming fall. He identifies as both transgender and gay, and has been stunned by the status in our culture of those in the GLBT community, especially those of the trans community. He believes that understanding breeds acceptance, and hopes that by bringing in a fresh mind and a determined spirit, he can help decrease discrimination by increasing awareness of the community as a whole. He lives with his dad, brother, and clearly lesbian dog, and plans to commute from Amherst to the Greater Boston PFLAG Board meetings.

John Dacey (Lexington, standing for 1st term), and his wife, Linda, are members of the Follen Unitarian Church, where he is a lay minister and she is Board President. He has twice led the homophobia workshop at that church, and was a leader in its being designated a "Welcoming Congregation." John is a professor of human development at Boston College, specializing in adolescents and young adults. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the U. U. Urban Ministry, as well as Director of Resources providing a safe haven for teens after school. He is particularly interested in ameliorating the critical impact of parental reaction on their adolescent child's coming out process.

Linda Patterson (Needham, standing for 1st term), and husband, John, became interested in PFLAG through friends after their son came out at age 15. Linda is a speaker in PFLAG's Safe Schools program. Linda and John are active at Wellesley Friends Meeting (Quakers) where Linda keeps Friends informed about major gay rights legislation, and organizes a group to march in the Gay Pride Parade each year. After a long career as a graphic designer, Linda turned her talents to marketing, and currently coordinates direct marketing for the membership department at the Museum of Science in Boston. Linda and John also have a daughter, Grace, who has many gay friends, attended BAGLY activities as a high school student, and is studying to be a social worker.

Debby Rempis (Wellesley, standing for 2nd term), and husband, Andy, are proud parents of Alex and David, both adult gay men. Debby is a retired bookseller and avid reader. Former board memberships include the Friends of The Wellesley College Library; Wellesley College Alumnae Association; Wellesley Junior Women's Club; and the Vestry at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Natick. She has volunteered for The Hospice of the Good Shepherd, AIDS Action, and the Mass. Assn. for the Blind. She associated with PFLAG after her older son came out in 1994. She hopes her work with PFLAG makes the world a more accepting place for her sons and the rest of the GLBT population. She feels strongly that discrimination of any kind is simply cruel and wrong. She brings her organizational skills to the PFLAG Board.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MONTHLY PFLAG MEETINGS

If you cannot reach one of the numbers below, call the PFLAG office at (781) 891-5966.

Arlington -- 2nd Tuesday, 7:15pm, First Parish Church, Sunshine Nursery School, 630 Mass Ave., Arlington (781) 891-5966 pflagarlmass@yahoo.com.

Brewster/Cape Cod -- 3rd Monday, 7:00pm, 1st Parish Brewster, Main St. (508) 398-6471

Cape Ann -- 1st Tuesday, 7:00-9:00pm, First Universalist Church of Essex, 57 Main St., Essex, MA 01929, www.uuessex.org for directions. Contact: Maria at m_menendez@verizon.net.

Concord -- 3rd Sunday, 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal Church Library, 81 Elm (enter from River St.) Contact: Beth (978) 692-7677, bobandbeth@comcast.net.

Dorchester -- 3rd Thursday, 6:30pm, Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington St., Conference Room A. Contact: Lucretia lucretiakeygodfrey@msn.com or (781) 891-5966.

Easton Area -- 4th Monday, 7:30pm (if holiday, then 3rd Monday); Unity Church, 9 Main St. (508) 238-0567, pflageaston@comcast.net. Co-Chairpersons: Cecile Arnold and Mary Cuddy Sutherland.

Fall River -- 1st Wednesday of the month. 7:00-9:00pm at Durfee High School, 360 Elsbree St. Room 101. Use the main entrance. Contacts: Mary Zema, Marianne Quinn (401) 391-1874, zemawoman@verizon.net.

Falmouth/Cape Cod -- Contact: Anne (508) 548-1038, annenfred@verizon.net

Martha's Vineyard -- 3rd Sunday, 3:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 238 Main, Vineyard Haven, (508) 627-4948, rabrown1950@aol.com.

Reading -- 2nd Thursday, 7:30pm, Loring House, 211 Summer Ave., Reading, MA Email Linda at: whtsthpnt@gmail.com. (On the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, at the intersection of Woburn St. and Summer Ave. Park in the parking lot between the church and Loring House.)

Springfield -- 4th Wednesday, 7:00pm, Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 N Westfield St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030-1672; (413) 786-5061, agrace1966@comcast.net.

Worcester -- 3rd Wednesday, 7:00pm, The Bridge, 4 Mann Street, pflagworchester@iname.com.

Non-PFLAG Group meetings:

Always Our Children -- 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7:00pm, Community Room of Sacred Heart Convent (behind Sacred Heart Church), 395 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01104, Contact: Ann (413) 736-6803

Straight Spouses Group -- For Boston group, contact ssn.boston@comcast.net or call Ivan (508) 966-0275 or email Tara at tgl563@gmail.com. Other areas use: www.StraightSpouse.org.

Transgender Group, Waltham/Tiffany Club of New England -- Call (781) 899-3230 or (781) 891-9325 for info.



The Samaritans provide a free and confidential 24-hour befriending helpline. This unique service, staffed entirely by volunteers, provides unconditional and non-judgmental support to anyone who feels alone, depressed, or in crisis.

Samariteens is a peer support line staffed by teens talking to teen callers during after-school and weekend hours. For more information on volunteering, call us at 617-536-2460 or visit us online at www.samaritansofboston.org. If you need to talk to someone on our help lines for any reason, you can reach us at **617-247-0220** or **877-870-HOPE (4673)** or for teens at **800-252-TEEN (8336)**.

(Candidates For Directors To The Board—Continued from page 3)

Amy E. G. Stickles (Jamaica Plain, standing for 1st term), with over 10 years experience in multicultural leadership and facilitation, has led trainings in a variety of settings including schools, social service agencies, health care organizations, and foundations. She is a known diversity speaker at several Boston area independent schools, and currently works for the Department of Children and Families as the Diversity Initiatives Project Manager. Amy is a black, transracially adopted lesbian mother of Michael (17) and Camryn (3). She holds a degree in Health, K-12 Physical Education, and Exercise Physiology from Howard University.

Sue Wilson (Brookline, standing for 1st term), lives with Laura (her spouse as of 8/16/08!), her 15 year-old daughter, Lainey, and the family's Golden Retriever. Sue is an attorney, with law offices in Brookline and Mashpee, and practices personal injury and patients' rights law. She has been active in the GLBT community since coming out over 20 years ago, and has served on the Boards of GLAD, MLGBA, MGLPC, and Am Tikva. She wants to work with Greater Boston PFLAG to help make the coming out process easier for individuals and their families than it was for her.

Timothy Woodward, (Burlington, standing for 2nd term), spent six years as a high school English teacher

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ADVERTISING INFORMATION

All ads must be camera-ready (that is, in a format ready to print). Mail your ad and payment to Greater Boston PFLAG, PO Box 541619, Waltham, MA 02454-1619, or e-mail your ad as an attachment to Pflagsafeschools@aol.com.

	PER ISSUE	PER YEAR (4x)
Business Card, 3-1/2" w x 2" h	\$15	\$50
Quarter page, 3-1/2" w x 4" h	\$25	\$100

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

November 14, 2008

Back-to-School Reading for the LGBTQ Student

Timothy Woodward, GBPFLAG Board Member

The beginning of the school year is an exciting, yet stressful time for all students. For LGBT and questioning students, going back to school can be especially trying. Dealing with crowded hallways filled with new faces, finding new classrooms, and new teachers with new expectations is difficult enough.

LGBTQ students are also struggling with their sexuality at a time when many of their friends seem to have it all figured out.

It doesn't help that schools' English curricula are ill-equipped to help students in this situation. English class reading lists have a dearth of LGBT literature, and what little there is, is typically glossed over, completely ignored, or hopelessly antiquated. However, quality LGBT books do exist, and are becoming increasingly easy to find in libraries and on the shelves of the local bookstore. When students see themselves in the books they read, they are more engaged and more likely to continue reading.

Here are some LGBT novels worth checking out and passing along to the LGBTQ students in your life.

For the middle schooler:

Totally Joe by James Howe

So Hard to Say by Alex Sanchez

For the 9th-10th grader:

Geography Club by Brent Hartinger

Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan

For the 11th-12th grader:

Rainbow Boys by Alex Sanchez
Sanchez continues the stories of Nelson, Kyle, and Jason in his follow up novels, *Rainbow High* and *Rainbow Road*.

A Secret Edge by Robin Reardon

For the college student:

A Density of Souls by Christopher Rice
Letters to Montgomery Clift by Noel Alunit

The RINGS

By Laina R. Wilson, age 14

Laina was the ring-bearer for the recent wedding of her mom and her mom's partner of 4 years. She wrote this poem for them, and read it during the wedding ceremony.

This symbol of renewal,
The circles in my hands,
The rings I'm handing off to you
Are simply wedding bands.
However, as you may imagine
These metals mean much more
Than the simple shape they take
Of this you can be sure.
Round and round, and round they go
A circle never ends, you know
A ring a band whatever you call it
Represents the continuous
Never ending and glorious
Cycles in this "circle of life"

The months that never halt their rotation
The seasons that never cease their circulation
The holidays that never end their celebration
Like the celebration of marriage
We, as family and friends share today
The start of yet another cycle here to stay
With compassion of family, who are always
there for support
And admiration of friends, with whom you can
always resort
The passion of lovers, who like my now two
mothers
Is never ending
Like these rings in my hands
As I pass to you moms, your wedding bands.

Rabbi Steve Greenberg at Wheaton College (MA) on October 30th

Greater Boston PFLAG invites you to an evening presentation by the world's first openly gay Orthodox Rabbi, Steve Greenberg, to be held at Wheaton College at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 30. The event, hosted by Wheaton's LGBTIQSA Alliance in collaboration with Greater Boston PFLAG and other Wheaton groups and offices.

Rabbi Greenberg will speak about his experience as an openly gay Orthodox Rabbi and his thinking on related issues. He connects well with people of all faiths and sexual orientations partly because his story is so fascinating, but also because it touches on issues of faith and identity that are relevant and important to us all, such as: What is it like being a part of (or for others who are a part of) an organization or group which while meaningful to us, is not welcoming to us? How can our personal identity affect the perceptions others have of us in the professional sphere, and how can we deal with this, and maybe influence others?

The presentation will include a clip from the DVD "Trembling Before God," a documentary of personal stories of Hasidic and Orthodox Jews who are gay and lesbian that "shatters assumptions about sexuality, faith, and religious fundamentalism." At the end of the presentation, Rabbi Greenberg will take questions from the audience. Following the presentation, there will be a reception during which people can meet the Rabbi, chat, and eat.

Wheaton College, at 26 East Main Street in Norton, MA, is located South of Boston, near the Comcast Center (formerly the Tweeter Center) in Attleboro. Wheaton is within a reasonable driving distance from the locations of many Greater Boston PFLAG chapters. Wheaton is about half an hour away from Easton and Fall River, 45 minutes from Boston and Dorchester, and an hour from Worcester, Reading, Concord, and Arlington. Driving directions to the Visitor's Parking Lot are online at <<http://wheatoncollege.edu/about/Driving.html>>. The presentation will be downstairs (in Ellison Lecture) in the Watson Fine Arts building, which is across the street from the entrance to the visitor's lot.

(Candidates For Directors To The Board—Continued from page 4)
 at Shawsheen Valley Technical High School. As an out, gay teacher, Tim worked hard to promote equality and acceptance within school walls. He started the GSA at Nashoba Valley Technical High School, and helped secure a grant for faculty training at Shawsheen. He is a writer and recently completed “Purple Cow”, a GLBT young adult novel.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE CANDIDATES,
 TERMS END SEPTEMBER, 2010:**

Inez Dias Folsom (Beverly, standing for 1st term), has been an active member of PFLAG since 1996, and served on the 2008 Pride and Passion committee. She is the mother of a daughter and twins sons. Mark, her gay son, died of AIDS in 1996. It was then that she became an activist for LGBT rights by speaking for the Greater Boston PFLAG Speakers Bureau, advocating for gay marriage through her work for MassEquality, and writing many letters-to-the-editor. She has also served for many years as captain of the GB-PFLAG AIDS Walk Team.

Tim Woodward (see bio above)

**RETURNING DIRECTORS,
 TERMS END SEPTEMBER, 2009:**

Meg Costello (Amesbury, 1st term), is beginning her second year as a Director for Greater Boston PFLAG. She is a Culinary Arts Instructor at Shawsheen Valley Technical High School, and also sits on the Board of Directors for Massachusetts SkillsUSA as their Education Committee Representative. She sees her role on both boards as a unique opportunity to advance the goals of Greater Boston PFLAG's Safe Schools Initiative.

Jeff Cowen (Waltham, 3rd term), is a straight ally involved in gay advocacy since the early 90's when he

was horrified to witness firsthand acts of homophobia. Jeff is a software engineer who also builds custom configured PCs, and is the web-master for Greater Boston PFLAG. He has served on SpeakOut!'s Board, and has been a speaker for both SpeakOut! and PFLAG. His activism extends to being involved with pro-choice escorting.

Lucretia Godfre, (Boston, 1st term), is a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor who has been working in the field of human services almost 20 years. She is devoted to her work, and has served in the non-profit sector in a variety of capacities. She believes that every one should be treated with the highest level of respect, dignity. Today she continues to advocate for those who are afflicted with tribulations related to addiction, as well as those who experience the pain and tragedy faced by social injustices because of their sexual orientation. She is the mother of four: two boys and a set of twin girls. One of the twins identifies as lesbian.

Beth-Anne Halpert (Wayland, 1st term), is a lawyer who has worked in corporate compliance, and is currently working in a real estate practice. Over the years, she has served on many non-profit boards mostly in the Metro West area where she has lived for the past 28 years with her husband, Jonathan Ellman. She has two daughters and a son. Her son, Josh, is gay. Among her goals as a Greater Boston PFLAG Director is reviewing the By Laws to aid in the smooth operation of the organization.

Linda L. Peterson (Nahant, 1st term), is an out-mother of three adult children. She works as the Manager of Training for the Mass. Mentoring Partnership in Boston. Prior experiences include tenure as the Deputy Director of the Institute for Responsive Education, and fourteen

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I wish membership in Greater Boston PFLAG

Household @ \$40/year _____

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(President's Message —Continued from page 2)

direct correlation between risk behaviors by GLBT youth and parental rejection and, conversely, between success for GLBT youth and parental acceptance. Last year we began to develop new ways to reach out to parents to be sure that they have solid information about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression so that they learn about importance of giving their love and support to their children. In 2008-2009, we need to find new ways to expand this outreach to parents, and we need to recruit and train more volunteer speakers. May we suggest that you **become a Greater Boston PFLAG Speaker** to help the bureau spread our message of understanding, acceptance, and equality for all. The power of our stories brings about positive change--your story and your voice make the difference. Let us show you how.

We must sustain and build Greater Boston PFLAG's financial strength. We would hope that you would **Get Involved in building the future of this amazing organization. Please help out by:**

- **Renewing or starting your membership** by filling out the coupon on page 7 or go to www.gbpf.org. Give friends or relatives a gift of a PFLAG membership so they can also speak out for dignity, respect, and equality all over Massachusetts.
- **Join the Pride and Passion Committee**, be a donor to the silent auction or introduce us to a new sponsor. And make a commitment to attend.

Please call the office or me to volunteer. And thanks for your support! We look forward to a bright 2008-2009.

(Candidates For Directors To The Board—Continued from page 7)

years as an Associate Director of a Parent Information Center for the Boston Public Schools. Her experience includes developing events and venues promoting school, family, and community partnerships within diverse urban populations. She volunteers as an English Conversation Instructor for the Lynn Time Bank. After volunteering on the GB-PFLAG 2007 Pride and Passion Committee, she co-chaired the committee for Pride and Passion 2008.

Edward Walker (Belmont, 1st term), is the father of two in college and the stepfather of twins in middle school. He is married to Sue Levy. Ed is a MIT-trained software engineer who makes his skills available as needed to Greater Boston PFLAG. Before joining the board of GB-PFLAG, Ed was (and still is) an active MassEquality volunteer. He is active in his Reform Jewish congregation, Beth El Temple Center in Belmont.

Kicking off a new season and school year!

By Pam Garramone, Executive Director

As a former elementary school teacher, the fall season has always felt like a new beginning - new students, excitement, high energy, and hopes.

It's a good time to think about how we can be effective in our goals: to reduce GLBT attempted suicides, violence and risk behaviors, and help to create safe school climates. An additional goal is to work with families so that they can love, accept, and celebrate their children just the way they are!

It's a good time to think about ways to support parents of GLBT youth, and the teachers who work with our children. Parents, teachers, and school staff all want to help our youth succeed and feel safe, welcome, and included in every school and every family. We have resources available for schools and families - student and faculty training, support groups, helpline, and one-to-one parent outreach.

Our Safe Schools Program works to educate and support school staff, to address anti-gay name-calling and bullying, provide ways in which teachers can be inclusive in the curriculum, and make schools a safe place for all youth including GLBT youth.

This year we are reaching out to Gay Straight Alliance students to invite their parents to an evening event where we will show the new documentary, *Anyone and Everyone*. In it, families from many walks of life and diverse backgrounds talk about their process of acceptance of their gay or lesbian child. Parents and their child will connect in a powerful way and begin the process of understanding one another.

Get Involved! Help us reach our goals! We need you!

We need speakers! Parents of LGBTQ people, straight allies, and LGBTQ people. SpeakOut Boston will conduct Speaker Training on Saturday, October 25 and 26. (go to www.speakoutboston.org to register!) Tell them Greater Boston PFLAG sent you! Our most powerful tool for social change is the story of our lives.

We need photogenic people! We are working on a new set of posters for the schools, doctors' offices, and religious organizations, even the MBTA! If you or someone you know, would like to be on a poster, send us a photo and contact information! We need straight and GLBQ youth and parents with their children.

We need volunteers! Join our Committees - Pride and Passion, Newsletter, Outreach, Finance, Development, Communications, and Scholarship

We look forward to working with you in support of our mission: Support, Education, and Advocacy.

Back to School, Back to the GSA

by Timothy Woodward (former high school English teacher and Greater Boston PFLAG board member.)

The beginning of the school year is a time of great opportunity and optimism. New clothes, new classrooms, new teachers, new clubs: it's a fresh start for everyone. For the GSA, it's important to get off on the right foot and keep that energy and momentum.

Often at the beginning of the year, GSAs struggle with the loss of last year's seniors, the students who, through their experience and longevity, were the main organizers and leaders of the club. If other students don't quickly fill the void, it is all too easy for a GSA to lose direction. Here are some ideas about how to avoid the trap and jumpstart your GSA this fall.

Throw a party. Everyone loves a party and nothing brings in students like free food, candy, or stickers. Make sure everyone who comes signs in with their name and homeroom or first period teacher so that you can find them again. Invite them back for the first meeting of the year the following week; it will still be fresh in their memories.

Make your next meeting "invite a friend/freshman." The number one reason why people come to anything is because they are asked. If everyone in the GSA brings one person, the membership will double instantly!

Involve staff and faculty. While busy faculty might not be able attend meetings regularly, that doesn't mean they don't want to support the GSA. My GSA made small care packages with cookies and rainbow painted rocks that teachers could display on their desks. Many teachers chose to show their support by keeping the rock in plain sight. It was a subtle but effective statement to the whole school.

Sponsor a contest. An LGBT-themed art or poetry contest not only encourages involvement, but also gives you an opportunity to showcase your club by displaying the winners. Ask local supportive businesses if they will donate a prize for the winners.

Mentor a freshman. Team up upperclassmen with freshmen or new club members. Upperclassmen can act as a support and offer advice between meetings. They can also help by reminding new students when and where to come to meetings.

Set Goals. Try to have at least one goal to accomplish at each meeting. If club members feel like they are doing something, they will be more likely to continue coming. Goals can be as simple "get to know one new member" or more complex like "plan a diversity day."

Hold Elections. Students feel more committed when they have clear expectations and assigned duties. It also makes the job of advisor easier when you can delegate

responsibilities, and you don't have to be the one to answer every question.

Have Fun. GSAs do a lot, including providing support to students and educating/creating visibility within the school. But a GSA also needs to provide a fun social outlet. Many students don't have another safe place to be themselves. Giving students time to hang out, relax, and just enjoy themselves may be a GSA's most important function.

Meet Alessandra Colia: GBPFLAG College Intern

When my brother came out, I knew that was it. I finally understood that it was fate that I had so many GLBT people in my life, and knew what I wanted to do with my professional career. I had worked in the international and domestic adoption fields since my undergraduate studies (at Connecticut College), and I watched my boss and his partner struggle to adopt (in Florida). I felt outraged as to the injustices the GLBT community faces, and was inspired to find out how I could be involved with helping. This led me to Greater Boston PFLAG. I am currently a Final Year student at Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, and for my internship I will be here at Greater Boston PFLAG for 24 hours a week for the school year. At BC, I am a Macro student with a concentration in Children, Youth, and Families; so I am very excited to be a part of the Greater Boston PFLAG team. I hope in the coming year I get a chance to meet everyone in the Greater Boston PFLAG family!

Meet Wendy Jason: GBPFLAG Graduate Student

During my senior year of high school, I spent a month volunteering at a hospice for HIV positive men, and became very close with a few of the gay residents. This quickly opened my eyes to the struggles that gay men have to face in our society, and motivated me to dedicate more of my time to promoting equal treatment for the GLBT community. In college, I joined the campus GSA, and felt proud to be a part of such a vocal, strong, and inspiring group of peers. For the last five years I lived in Homer, AK working as a case manager for youth at a mental health center. While providing mental health services at the local high school, I learned that there was no GSA or any other form of support for GLBT youth in the community. Frustrated, I began brainstorming with friends in the GLBT community about ways to support youth, for whom coming out meant opening themselves up to harassment and bullying. After lots of dialogue we decided to start a new PFLAG chapter. I am currently working towards my Masters in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis. I'm thrilled to now be a part of the Greater Boston PFLAG team, and look forward to meeting you all!

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When you attend SpeakOut's renowned speaker training, you will learn how to craft your personal stories for sharing in schools, organizations, businesses, and more. As a volunteer speaker with Greater Boston PFLAG and SpeakOut, you will help build an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance of GLBT lives and experiences. The training is designed for anyone who wants to use public speaking as a tool for social change.

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